

Pescott Papers 1 – Thomas Trewitt & Mary Ann Pescott (April 2000)

Thomas Trewitt Pescott and Mary Ann Dean were married at Gosforth, Northumberland in the far north-east of England on 9 April 1852. (The IGI site on the net records Tom as 'Thomas Trewick Prescott', ugh!) Tom's paternal grandmother was Elizabeth Trewitt, hence his second name. One finds the spellings 'Trewhit', 'Trewhet' and 'Trehett' as well in the neighbouring counties of Northumberland and Durham. Descendants who carry the name include: George Trehett Pescott and Jack Trehett Dean Pescott, the latter also carrying Mary Ann's surname. Another to carry the Dean name is Lizzie Dean Pescott. Tom's mother's name, Manners, is carried by Tom's older brother, Moses Manners Pescott; David Manners Pescott, Elizabeth Manners Pescott and George Manners Pescott. No-one appears to carry Mary Ann's mother's name: Clark(e). The mothers of Elizabeth Clark(e) and Elizabeth Manners are not known, although it is likely they both had 'Elizabeth' as their given name.

We have a copy of a letter dated 22.4.1891 written by Thomas T. (courtesy of Joscelyn and Beverley Pescott of Lane Cove, NSW) in which he spells his mother's surname 'Maners' on three occasions. Who can you trust? Tom had written to a firm of accountants or solicitors in England hoping to establish a claim, via his mother, to money lying in chancery: 'I had often heard her make [a statement], to the effect, that she was entitled to a large amount of property and had she not been so foolish as to destroy some important papers in connection therewith she could have claimed it'. I wonder if Tom's dose of dreaming was related to a daydream held by my grandmother, Lil (Pescott) Morriss. She claimed we were related to nobility – probably having in mind that the Dukes of Rutland have the Manners surname. David Charles John Robert Manners, born 8.5.1959, is the 10th Duke of Rutland. Before the 1st duke (1703), the Manners were Earls of Rutland dating from 1525, and before that were lords. (Rutland, in central England, was one of the small counties that disappeared when county boundaries were redrawn in 1974.)

Tom also throws interesting light on the name 'Pescott'. 'My father's name was "Thomas Pescod", but for some reason unknown to me, he altered the name to "Pescott". I have his indentures dated 1796 signed by his father and himself as "Joseph Pescod". He was born at Swalwell, County of Durham.' Joseph's discharge papers are written out to 'Joseph Pescott, Private', and he signs himself as 'Joseph Pescott'. His discharge, dated 24.5.1810, records that he had been in the army for 6 years 10 months, that he was 24 at the time and that he was discharged because of 'a consumptive tendency which renders him unfit for further service'. The reason Tom related the change of names is that he found a 'Sarah Pescod' whose relatives, apparently, could claim estate from chancery.

When Joseph married Elizabeth Manners in 1820, he used the name 'Pescott', and their five children (4 boys and 1 girl) carried that name. Moses (number 1) died aged 11; George died aged 29 and there is no evidence that he married; Moses (number 2) died in infancy; and the girl, Elizabeth, married William Wailes. It is quite possible that Thomas T. is the only member of the Pescod/Pescott family to pass on the name 'Pescott'. In other words, it is possible that no person with the surname 'Pescott' in the UK is related to us – but that Pescods could be.

In a 1965 issue of the Victorian Historical Magazine, Ian McLaren claimed, in an article on Tom and Mary's son, Edward Edgar, that Tom was 'encouraged to emigrate to Australia by a relative because of the great demand for his trade at the gold diggings of Victoria'. We (i.e. my sister, Wynsome Penn, and I) believe that relative to have been a Dean, since relations of Mary Ann are known to have come to Victoria. We have not tracked any of them down yet, although there are some clues Wyn is following up.

Tom aged 29, a pregnant Mary aged 24 and their two children Elizabeth and Mary Ann set sail from Liverpool on 16.8.1857 in the ship *Shalimar* of 1402 tons with Captain R.T. Brown as captain. During the voyage of 87 days, the couple's first son, Thomas Blenkinsop *Shalimar* Pescott, was born: 'Shalimar' after the ship and 'Blenkinsop' possibly after a relative. 'Blenkinsop' is a fairly common surname in the north-east of England. (I have come across a record of a Blenkinsop-Trehitt marriage, but cannot establish a link to our Trehitts.)

As a journeyman carpenter in Geelong, where Tom and Mary landed, Tom could earn 12 shillings a day, while labourers could only command 8 shillings a day. Tom worked for wages for seven years, finding himself working on many of the railway stations on the Geelong–Ballarat line.

His Works Do Follow Him¹

It took only three months to build the Pakington Street² United Methodist Free Church. When, on 20 May 1877, the church was opened, the building was crowded, especially in the evening when seats had to be put down the aisles to accommodate listeners³.

Among the listeners would have been Thomas Pescott, the man whose memory we are celebrating this weekend, because it was he, who, as contractor, built that church.

In 1890 he built additions to the Sunday school here at Noble Street⁴, while his sons David and George built the semicircular kindergarten hall in 1915.

It is 150 years since our ancestors Thomas Trewitt Pescott and Mary Ann Dean were married in All Saints Church, Gosforth, in England at Easter time 1852. The Pescotts left England and arrived in Geelong in 1857. In the year Thomas built the Pakington Street church, 1877, he was, here at Noble Street, a Sunday school teacher, librarian and treasurer. He would later become the school's superintendent, and, as the Honour Roll attests, a church trustee.

In a paper I wrote on Thomas, I mentioned that 'the inscription to an early record of trustees was *Their Works Do Follow Them*', to which I added 'Amen'. I took the text to mean something like 'their works continued on after their departure', and that is what I was agreeing with.

The text is part of Revelations 14, verse 13, which in the King James version reads: 'And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them".' When I read this I wondered what exactly I was agreeing with, so I went to the more modern Moffatt translation, in which the second half says, 'Even so – it is the voice of the Spirit; let them rest from their toils; for what they have done goes with them.'

What a blow! It turns out that 'their works do follow them' means virtually the opposite of what I thought it would have meant. Their works go with them; they don't go on after them.

I'll expand on what I thought the inscription meant.

In the biological sense, we are the works that follow Thomas and Mary.

In what we *do*, we are the works that follow Thomas and Mary. Several themes in Thomas's life typify the man. Two are obvious: his church life and his job as carpenter and joiner. In all generations, 2nd to 6th, there have been, and are, descendants who have followed Thomas's dedication to the life of the Christian church. In this way, his works follow him.

Thomas was a skilled artisan, proud of the work he did. He also became an employer. Many have followed his works in these respects.

Thomas was imbued with a love of nature, especially of plants.

This has been a trait in many of his descendants. In this respect his works do follow him.

Thomas loved music, especially singing. Here, too, his works follow him.

Thomas loved books and the learning associated with them. His works follow him.

We can see aspects of Thomas's interests in his descendants, not necessarily all characteristics in any one individual – for there are other influences operating.

In our being, the biological works that follow Thomas, we had no choice. In what we do with our lives, in what interests we follow, there is an element of choice which we impose on underlying predispositions. There is a third way in which Thomas's Works can follow him, which depends wholly on choice.

Thomas died on the 29th of August 1910. The concluding words spoken in this church in his eulogy were:

'He was known as a man of strict integrity, honest in all his dealings, and whose word was his bond.'

We can choose to be the works that follow Thomas Pescott, a man of strict integrity, honest in all his dealings and whose word was his bond.

We honour them both, Thomas Trewitt Pescott and Mary Ann Dean.

1 I had been given 5 minutes to deliver an address directed to Pescott descendants in the congregation, and told not to waffle on. I wore a stopwatch round my neck as a mark of mild protest.

2 Pakington Street Uniting and Noble Street Uniting were amalgamated in 2001. Members of the past Pakington Street church now attend Noble Street and were present when this address was given.

3 *Geelong Advertiser*, 21 May 1877.

4 Possibly the vestry.

Thomas **T** Pescott

What does the **T** stand for?

Thomas's paternal grandmother was Elizabeth Trewitt.

Clearly, the **T** stands for **TREWITT**.

BUT, the spelling of Elizabeth's father's name was Trehitt.

Clearly, the **T** stands for **TREWHITT**.

BUT, the spelling on the entries of Thomas's birth and marriage is Trewick.

Clearly, the **T** stands for **TREWICK**.

BUT, when Thomas's son George's first son was born he was named George Trehitt Richard Pescott (presumably, George would have consulted his father).

Clearly, the **T** stands for **TREWHITT**.

BUT, when Thomas's son Edward's first son was born he was named Jack Trehett Dean Pescott (presumably, Edward would have consulted his father).

Clearly, the **T** stands for **TREWHETT**.

BUT, when Thomas signed his name on his daughter Mary's death registration, he wrote Thomas Trewick Pescott.

Therefore, the **T** must stand for **TREWICK**.

BUT, when Thomas witnessed his wife's niece's marriage, he wrote Thomas Trehitt Pescott.

Therefore, the **T** must stand for **TREWHITT**.

Actually, all of the **T** names derive from a nickname for a person who was a crack marksman.

Anyone for **TRUEHIT**?

Pescott Papers 2 – Thomas T. Pescott (3rd born)

11.11.1871 *Geelong Advertiser*

The Newtown and Chilwell Council, being dissatisfied with the progress being made in the construction of a bridge at Queens Park, appointed Mr T. Pescott as clerk of works to oversee the construction being carried out by Mr Sinclair. [Tom was paid 11 shillings per day.]

15.8.1872 *G.A.*

A Geelong Builders and Contractors Association was formed with 14 members paying 10 shillings and 6 pence entrance fee. Mr Pescott was elected treasurer. [In 1892, he was recorded as the secretary.]

20.10.1875 *G.A.*

The erection of a new gallery to provide accommodation for 300 people was proceeding on time at the Hall of the Mechanics Institute, with Mr Pescott being the contractor for the carpenters' work.

3.4.1877 *G.A.*

The 27th anniversary of the Chilwell Wesleyan Sabbath School was celebrated by over 300 people at a tea meeting in the school hall. It was noted that the library had been extensively used – there having been 4495 issues made during the year. Mr Pescott was the librarian. Mr Pescott was a member of the 19-strong Church Committee.

21.5.1877 *G.A.*

The new United Methodist Free Church, erected in Pakington-street, was opened yesterday ... The contractor for the work was Mr T. Pescott.

14.1.1888 *News of the Week*

'Ocean Grove' is the name of the new settlement situated on the coast overlooking Bass Strait ... brought into daily communication with [Geelong] by Cobb and Co.'s coach ... One of the stringent regulations in connection with the settlement is that the new township shall be kept entirely free from the introduction of intoxicating liquors, and the establishment of a hotel will be made an impossibility ... yesterday the elaborately fitted-up Coffee Palace was formally opened ... Mr Pescott of Chilwell was the contractor for the work. He also erected an eight-roomed cottage for the Rev. T. Groves ... arrangements have been made with Mr Pescott to construct three large dwelling houses. [Tom also built a house for himself. He also built the Mercantile Bank in Geelong in 1888.]

1890 *N of the W*

An additional building was erected to complement the existing Sunday School at Noble Street Methodist Church. Mr T. Pescott was the builder.

1895 *Geelong Evening News*

[Advertisement] 'THOMAS PESCOTT and SONS, Builders and Contractors, McKillop-street (near the railway); estimates given for all kinds of builders and joiners work; repairs and alterations executed on the shortest notice.'

19.1.1929 *G.A.* (on the history of the Duke of Wellington Hotel, Pakington Street)

'When this hotel was delicensed, Mr T. Pescott acquired the property, and converted it into a private dwelling house, and here the Pescott family lived for several years.'

10.9.1902 G.A.

A notice recorded the golden wedding anniversary of Thomas Trehwett Pescott and Mary Ann Dean – present address Edward Street Shepparton.

30.8.1910 G.A. [Death notice]

'PESCOTT – on the 29th inst., at his residence , 14 McKillop Street, Thomas, beloved husband of Mary Pescott, in his 83rd year. At rest. The funeral cortege will leave ... for the Eastern Cemetery.'

6.9.1910 G.A.

A memorial service was held on Sunday evening for the late Mr Thos Pescott. Among his remarks, the Rev. R. Kelly said: 'The fathers and founders of Chilwell Methodism are passing away. Very few links that connect the church of the present with that of 50 years ago remain. In the recent departure of Mr Thos Pescott we have said farewell to one who for half a century was identified with it in membership, and took his full share of labor and responsibility therewith ... Though coming from a stronghold of Methodism in the old country he was brought up in the Anglican Church, and served his boyhood as a chorister. Losing his father when he was a lad of 14, he was indebted to his mother for carefully guarding his religious interests ... For many years he held office as a trustee, and in other ways rendered valuable service to the cause ... Mr Pescott was known in the world of trade and commerce as a man of strict integrity, honest in all his dealings, and whose word was his bond ...'

Ian McLaren in *Victorian Historical Magazine*, May 1965

'The Pescotts lived in Clarendon Street, Chilwell ... Latrobe Terrace, Chilwell ... a large two-storey house in McKillop Street, Geelong.' (Note that McLaren omitted the Pakington Street residence.)
'Thomas Pescott was a director of the [unsuccessful] Chilwell Gold Mining Co. formed in 1878.'

From a 2-foolscap-page article on David James Pescott:

'In the year 1864, [Tom] decided to open up in business on his own ... he was compelled to make a slight move to permit of the railway line to run through the actual block on which his premises were situated ...

He was for a great many years Secretary of the MUIOOF and a trustee of his own lodge. He also took a most active part in the formation of the Chilwell Free Library ...

He handed over – in the year 1900 – his business to his two eldest sons David James and George William. To quote his own words, he did so "For natural love and affection".'

From the 1965 McLaren Paper in the *Victorian Historical Magazine*

'[In coming to Australia, the Pescott family] travelled with the Edgar family, whose name was to be included in those given to [Edward Edgar Pescott] ...

[Tom] had an intense love of nature, which he transmitted to his son Edward and other members of the family; Edward dedicated *The Native Flowers of Victoria* "to the memory of My Father who, through his innate love of the beautiful in nature, first led me into Nature's bypaths".'

Pescott Papers 3 – The Blenkinsop–Dean–Clarke–Edgar–Pescott Nexus

There's a title for you! First, Wyn has solved the mystery of where Tom and Mary Ann got the second name 'Blenkinsop' for their first son. Mary Ann (Dean) (1833 –1919) had an older brother, James Richard Dean (1831–?). He married Mary Ann Blenkinsop! And we stun (at least) a second bird – the origin of Mary Ann's seventh child's name, viz. James Richard Pescott.

That's the easy part. Mary Ann Dean's mother, Elizabeth Clarke (also spelt 'Clark') (1805–1845), had a sister Mary Ann Clarke (dates unknown) (throw caution to the wind – surely where Mary Ann Dean got her given names from).

1. Mary Ann Clarke married a chap by the name of Pringle (dates unknown). He appears to have died young, and they had no children.

2. Mary Ann (Clarke) Pringle married John David Edgar (d. 1843) in 1835. (Pooh Bear would have said, 'Aha!'). They had two children, Elizabeth Janet Edgar (1836–1917) and David James Edgar (1839–1919). (Where do you reckon David James Pescott got his names from?) David James Edgar married Isabella McElhinney (spelt a million different ways) (1845–1897), migrated to Geelong, and must surely be the family that McLaren referred to in his 1965 article. Elizabeth Janet Edgar also migrated to Geelong, her married name being Collins.

Meanwhile, back in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Mary Ann (Clarke (Pringle)) Edgar is widowed again. Wait for it; read the next bit first.

Mary Ann Dean's mother, Elizabeth (Clarke) Dean, dies, leaving Mary Ann's father, James Dean, a widower. But not for long.

3. Mary Ann (Clarke (Pringle)) Edgar married her brother-in-law James Dean!

Here's your homework for the month: what is your relationship to Mary Ann (Clarke (Pringle (Edgar))) Dean?

David James and Isabella Edgar had a number of children, and like the Pescotts were closely associated with the Noble Street Methodist Church in Chilwell, Geelong. Not only did the Pescotts name some of their children after the Edgars, David James Pescott (1862–1947) and Edward Edgar Pescott (1872–1954), but the Edgars returned the compliment. Two of their children were named: Edward Pescott Edgar (a nice bit of symmetry) (1868–1942) and Thomas Clarke Edgar (1880–1913).

Of David and Isabella Edgars' family, the name of one girl is interesting, and I don't quite know how to interpret its significance: she was named Isabel Pringle Edgar (1871–1929). There were a number of Pringles living in Geelong at this time, some being recorded as having come from Northumberland.

Wyn has come up with more data (mostly from church records) on the siblings of some of our ancestors prior to Thomas and Mary Ann. If you want more sibling information, contact me or Wyn.

In going back to earlier generations, sometimes one simply comes to a dead end. In other cases, there is too much information. A case in point concerns Joseph Pescod. We suspect his father was also named Joseph Pescod, but there are about a dozen so-named candidates in Durham in the early 18th century. Likewise, it would appear that there was an Elizabeth Manners living in every street in, and hamlet near, Newcastle.

Another hurdle for would-be genealogists to stumble at was the tendency, in early records, to name only the father of a new-born, or to provide only the given name of the mother. It is the genes that are passed on to us, not the name, that goes to making us what we are. From a grandparent perspective, Wyn and I are a Pescott–Morriss–Parker–Wall product. But we are also a Clarke, an Anderson, a Grahame, a Manners, and so on and so on.

It was by chance that our Gran Lil (Pescott) Morriss lived longer than our three other grandparents. We remember her to be a lovely and loving person, eager to see her grandchildren do well in life. We wonder whether her personality was shared by her brothers and sisters – we like to think so.

While I'm in this reflective mood – boy, am I glad I'm not a member of the next generation. They have twice as much research to do. May 2000

Pescott Papers 4 – Liliias Jane Pescott (8th born)

Take out your homework – the question was: ‘What is your relationship to Mary Ann (Clarke (Pringle (Edgar))) Dean?’. Check your answer with the following:

- Mary Ann Dean [Pescott] was her niece; and the daughter of her husband.
- Liliias Jane Pescott was her grandniece; and the granddaughter of her husband.
- Liliias Merle Morriss was her great-grandniece; and the great-granddaughter of her husband.
- Wynsome Liliias Wall was her second great-grandniece, and the second great-granddaughter of her husband.
- Wendy Liliias Wall was her third great-grandniece, and the 3rd great-granddaughter of her husband.

Someone in the next generation would be a ‘fourth ...’ and so on. Notice that the ordinals (second, third etc.) refer to the generation, not to the order of birth within a generation. Everyone, like me and sister Wyn, who is a fourth generation Pescott–Dean descendant is a second great-grand-niece/nephew of Mary Anne Clarke, for instance.

Last month I said, rashly, ‘David James Edgar married Isabella McElhinney (spelt a million different ways) (1845–1897), migrated to Geelong, and must surely be the family that McLaren referred to in his 1965 article’. It seems that this must surely be wrong since the first of the Edgar–McElhinney children were born in USA – during the time of Thomas and Mary Ann’s migration to Australia. So, it must have been another Edgar family that McLaren referred to – actually, Wyn has been unable to confirm that any Edgar family sailed on the Shalimar with the Pescotts. There were a number of families of Edgars in Geelong late 1850s, including a Reverent Edgar, the minister of the Noble Street Church in the following decade.

Hoping to elucidate and not confuse, and using the same individuals as above:

- Mary Ann Dean was a first cousin of David James Edgar.
- Liliias Jane Pescott was a first cousin once removed.
- Liliias Merle Morriss was a first cousin twice removed.
- Wynsome Liliias Wall is a first cousin 3 times removed.
- Wendy Liliias Wall is a first cousin 4 times removed; etc.

(The number of ‘times removed’ refers to the number of generations separating two blood-related individuals.)

Now to Liliias Jane Pescott, known as Lil, 8th child and youngest daughter of Tom and Mary Ann Pescott – she was born at her parents’ home in McKillop Street, Geelong, on 29 June 1868. She went to school at Chilwell, at the forerunner of State School No. 2061, Chilwell in Pakington Street, and attended the Noble Street Methodist Church.

One of her favourite girlhood games was ‘knuckle bones’, played with sheep’s dried knuckle bones. The game consisted of throwing the bones up in the air and catching them on the back of your hand, increasing the number of bones after each successful catch – well, that’s what I remember of the game as Gran taught me. She with her knobbly, 70-year-old fingers beat me easily, but that didn’t count for much – after all, it was a girls’ game.

A number of loves characterised the early Pescott family: carpentry, Methodism, nature, teaching and singing. My impression is that the Pescott girls’ early lives centred on their church and on music. Certainly, this was the case for Lil – remember that her father was an Anglican choirboy back in Newcastle.

There are many references in the Geelong press in the 19th century to concerts and church services and functions that Lil, soprano, and her brother David, tenor, sang at. One article in 1887 mentioned solos by a Miss Pescott and another by Lil Pescott. Since Elizabeth was married at that stage, and Mary had died, the ‘Miss Pescott’ was Lil’s sister Fanny Wailes (what an opportunity for punsters). I’ll

have something to say about the 'Wailes' in a later paper. The youngest of Tom and Mary's children, Ted, also featured in a few newspaper reports, when at school age (1886–7), he won a number of singing/music competitions.

Some of the songs Lil is recorded as having sung are: 'When the Robins Nest Again', 'Life's Dream Is O'er' and 'Eternal Rest'.

Lil was gifted musically and was as intelligent and industrious as her brothers, but she never had the opportunities that they had – such were the religion-driven mores of the time. But she was no heroic stoic; she passed on to her daughters that their place in life was to be wife and mother, subservient to their husbands. The greatest regret that Lil's daughter Merle had in life was that she never ever had paid employment.

Lil married Harry Morriss, 7th of 11 children of James and Sarah (Cobb) Morriss, when she was 27 and Harry was 24, at Lil's brother George's home in McKillop Street, in 1895. Both George and David lived near their parents in the west end of McKillop Street for a number of years. Harry Morriss was, like his father, a farmer in Highton now a suburb of Geelong. My guess is that they would have met at a church function, for Lil had sung at Highton, and the Morrisses were, like the Pescotts, involved Methodists. Witnesses to the marriage document were Miss Mockridge and Harry's brother Fred Morriss.

Lil and Harry lived on, and farmed, a property owned by Harry's father in Scenic Road, Highton. It is only now that the last of that property is being suburbanised – long ago out of Morriss hands. Harry owned land in the neighbouring Duneed area, but the family never lived on it. In 1922, Harry sold that land apparently to buy a property in Shepparton.

In the Highton News section of the Geelong Advertiser, 15 February 1923, it was recorded:

It was with keen regret that the residents of Highton learnt that Mr and Mrs Morriss intend leaving the district at an early date for Shepparton ...

Mrs Morriss, besides being an active worker in the [Methodist] church and school, had charge of the choir, and did good work with the talent at her disposal. [How would the choir members have interpreted that?] ...

Miss G Morriss, besides being a Sunday school teacher ... was the church organist, and it can be safely said that the church has never been better served in that respect. Miss Hazel Morriss too was a teacher in the Sunday school, and had charge of the kindergarten.

And so the family (with the exception of Gladys) left for Shepparton. The motivation, we believe, was that Lil's son, Lance, was an asthmatic, and it was thought he would do better in a warmer climate. However, before they left, they would have celebrated Gladys's marriage to Les Lawry on 17 February 1923. It appears that Gladys and Les lived in the Scenic Road house for the first year or so of their married life.

It would also appear that the family shifted to Shepparton in order to set Lance up on the farm, because when Lance married Frances Hill on 26 April 1924, the family returned to Highton, presumably to Scenic Road. When Harry's father died in 1926, the property in Scenic Road was left to other members of the Morriss family, and Lil and Harry bought and moved to a farm nearby (just south-east of the present-day lookout at Highton). They lived there until 1937, when they shifted to Cook Street, Newtown, next door to their daughter Gladys and a Gary Ablett punt kick away from their daughter Merle.

My first memories of Gran are of two Christmas Day visits to her house, probably in 1935 and 1936 when I was 4 and 5 years old respectively. It was not so much remembering Gran so much that has stuck in my memory, rather it was the going out to, and returning from, Highton – one of my most favourite experiences – that I remember. Granpa Morriss fetched us, and the Lawry family, in his horse and buggy. There were no motor vehicles in those families in those days. The smells, the movement and the sounds of the trip all created an atmosphere absolutely exquisite and precious. No journey I have taken since – by car, truck, motor bike, tractor, boat, plane or ride-on mower – has matched the magic of sitting on the dash board of the buggy with one's feet dangling within inches of

the road, the horse's tail almost within reach, and behind, a grandfather so adept in his task that the horse/s responded obediently to the slightest of his dictates.

Gran was the centre of the family gathering; Granpa was deaf. She was oldish (a few years ago, I would have said she was old) in her late 60s, and had, with her daughters in earlier days, helped her husband in the dairy and with general farm chores. She was a worker. She delighted in playing her piano, now in the possession of a great granddaughter, and singing.

She encouraged, no, more than that, she insisted everyone around the piano give a musical item of some kind. This is my only 'black' memory of Gran. When it came to my turn, too shy to admit to knowing any song, Gran suggested I sing some nursery rhyme, and that to a 5-year-old boy was an insult. Forgive ya, Gran.

Another grandchild remembers:

In the time when daily bowel movements were considered de rigeur, I had apparently not satisfied the required health standards. I do recall a towel on the table, me with no pants on, a jug of warm, soapy water and an evil looking syringe. I fought and screamed, and Gran (who I always thought loved me) had my arms and legs firmly pinned so that the enema could be executed. This was no way for a gran to see a young lad.

Hey, who needs enemas with a friend like that?

Wyn's memories of Gran centre around family sing-songs both at 12 and 10 Cook Street, where Sankey choruses predominated. Gran tried to teach Wyn to play the piano, and to knit and sew.

As well as second; third, fourth and a few fifth generation descendants of Tom and Mary attended Noble Street Church and Sunday School. Gran was always interested in the 'choruses' that were being sung at anniversaries. She rarely referred to 'hymns'; they were either 'anthems' or 'choruses'. Odd, isn't it, the things that stick in the memory? Gran suffered with foot or leg trouble in her old age, so had difficulty in getting around and didn't get to church services then, but Noble Street remained dear to her heart throughout her life.

In the 1940s and 50s, Errol recalls his family taking Gran for Sunday afternoon drives in his Grandpa Woodard's old A model Ford with its narrow back doors:

I held the door open and had charge of the walking stick, Gran had one foot on the running board, Rob was in the car pulling her outstretched hand whilst Dad had the job of lifting and pushing her from behind. Did the neighbours laugh, or was this how everyone did it?

Gran's walking stick was an extension of her self. All of her grandchildren would remember her pushing stones or leaves off her garden path, of her using it to open a door, or of her catching the leg of a chair to turn it round. From Errol:

Meals at Highton were rather sombre affairs. The main task was eating, although Mum liked a chat, but with her deafness this was difficult. Gran could always be relied on to liven things up a bit. [She would rap] on the underside of the table, and we boys would rush to the door to see who was there. Great hilarity, except for Dad.

The only memory of Gran Morriss that my son Keith has is of her walking stick. Unable to pick him up, she would use her walking stick to play with him, although being prodded with a rubber-footed stick was not his idea of a great game, yet Errol remembered in earlier years being hooked round the leg by the stick, collapsing and thinking that it was great fun.

Lil was proud of her family, especially her brothers. She was proud of their accomplishments and their church association. She was keen to see her grandchildren do well, and hoped not too secretly that one of them might take up the ministry, and 'Wouldn't it be marvellous to be a missionary?'.

When Granpa Morriss died in 1944, Gran, then 76, took a live-in companion. My father was given the task of looking after Gran's garden area. He delegated me to mow the lawns once a week, and to dig up the bulk of the back yard for an initial crop of potatoes. So, for a few years, I spent much time at Gran's. After the chores, she would reward me with two shillings, some cake and a glass of milk.

When holidaying at Torquay with the Woodards, or later on when she was without a companion and was living either with the Woodards or the Walls, Gran always took it on herself to prepare the

vegetables for the daily meals. Once, at Torquay, while the family was out, Gran was preparing the whole meal when she spilled boiling water, scalding herself and was weeping with pain when the others returned.

Gran enjoyed the luxuries that having the power on afforded when she shifted to Geelong, but she took with her some of the habits that were associated with her sometimes hard farm life. She darned everybody's socks, and the darns had darns in them; a sock was still a sock while there was some of the original leg left. She continued to make her own soap out of lard and caustic soda, and made paper 'logs' out of tightly screwed-up newspaper. She was ever a 'waste not, want not' person.

I leave you with Errol's word picture of Lillas Jane (Pescott) Morriss in her last years.

Of course she is wearing slippers. Granma Morriss's feet were always in slippers ... zip-up ones ... in the days when zip fasteners were rarely used, and never on slippers, of all things. Between the slippers and a long dress (decorously only about foot up from the ground) are the grey lisle stockings, complete with concertina'd wrinkles. They were never any other way (probably no girdle). And of course the cardie; a sure sign of the Gran.

Gran rests in the cemetery at Highton next to the church where she once sang and conducted the choir.



Lil, 1928 or 1929.

Pescott Papers 5 – George William Pescott (6th born)

A major part of the life of the first and second generation of the Australian Pescotts was bound up with the Noble Street Methodist Church (before 1904, the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and latterly the Noble Street Uniting Church) of Chilwell, Geelong, so it is fitting that some of the history of that institution be included here. Many third generation descendants, a number of the fourth generation and a few of the fifth continued the connection.

Possibly the last to be actively associated with the church were my children in the early 1970s when they attended the Sunday School and Sue sang in the choir. I did not realise when we left Geelong in 1974 that a continuous family link spanning 117 years was being broken. (I had rejected all religious belief at this stage, but I have always acknowledged the prime importance of the ethical and moral precepts I learned from Noble Street. I'm still, proudly, a wowser.)

Most of the following information in the first section is gleaned from Noble St. Methodist Church & Sunday School Centenary 1849–1949 compiled by Edward E. Pescott, assisted by George W. Pescott and J.F. Frier.

The Sunday School, fronting Saffron Street, predated the Church, fronting Noble Street (the two sets of buildings being contiguous), by a year. They were but 7 years old when Tom, Mary Ann and their three children settled a further block to the south in a two-roomed house in Clarendon Street.

When the Pescotts arrived in 1857, one of the Noble Street committeemen was William Miles, whose son Frederick George Miles married Tom and Mary's eldest daughter, Elizabeth Manners Pescott, in 1879. There are no recorded births for this couple.

Tom became a trustee of the church (1875), as did Mary Ann's first cousin David James Edgar. During this time, Richard Lawry was also a trustee. Tom and Richard would later be related by marriage through their grand daughter and grandson, Gladys Morriss and Les Lawry. Another early church trustee was F.T. Everett, possibly the Frederick Thomas Everett (or the father of) who married Tom's grand daughter Lizzie Dean Pescott. Tom's son David James Pescott was also an early trustee.

George W. Pescott became a trustee in 1898, and was the oldest living trustee when the church held its centenary celebrations in 1949. Also trustees at that time were Thomas Howard Pescott (1932), Harold Brownfield Pescott (1940), and another Pescott in-law, Stan Wall (1947).

The inscription to an early record of trustees was Their Works Do Follow Them , to which I add 'Amen'.

George W. was a member of the choir for many years, and it is probable that all second generation Pescotts were also. George's older brother David held the position of choirmaster for over 40 years, and his son Tom was also choirmaster for a time. A Miss Everett was organist for a time – was this Winifred Everett, daughter of Lizzie Dean Pescott and Frederick Everett?

Tom senior became a Sunday School teacher in 1863, and was later Sunday School Superintendent (1878–1881), a position that George W. later held. Following is a passage from Ted's Noble Street Centenary book written by J.F. Frier.

GEORGE W. PESCOTT [b. 1864] ... joined the Church early in 1873 as a junior member. Since then to the present, a period of 76 years, he has maintained a full and living connection with Noble Street. He became a teacher in the Sunday School, for a brief period a local preacher, and served in the choir for many years. He became a trustee as well. He was Sunday School Secretary for some years, later to become Superintendent of the School and subsequently of the Senior School: in all three periods covering many years. His last work was to be leader of the Young Men's Class for a goodly number of years, until he, full of years and work, retired with the love and esteem of his friends.

George would have been busy in his role as superintendent. A 1910 Diamond Jubilee composite photo showed a staff of 33 teachers, five librarians (one of whom was George's brother, David), three 'School Visitors', a secretary and a treasurer – 43 in all. George and David are recognisably brothers, both left-parted dark-haired, straight-edged full-lip moustache, single-breasted suit coat with vest and watch chain (parents' 21st birthday presents?) and high rounded collars. By contrast, their father had

no moustache but had a beard that started from below his ears and covered his bow tie.

Recorded in the Geelong News of the Week, 7.4.1910, is: 'George W. Pescott presided over the celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee of the Noble Street Methodist Sunday School ... A vocal duet by the Misses Pescott was well received ... Miss Everett was accompanist'.

Two of George's children, Ethie Leila and Cecil Edward, as well as his nephew David Manners Pescott are recorded on the Noble Street World War I Honour Roll – a roll that numbers 131 names. The 90 names on the World War II Role of Honour, a 31% decrease, mirrors the steady decline in Noble Street numbers from its heyday in the early nineteen hundreds. On the second honour roll appear the Pescotts: Lucy Joyce, Meering Edith, Howard James and David Norman.

At the time of the 1949 centenary, George's son Harold B. Pescott was the Trust Secretary, and the Sunday School's dux medallist was Wynsome L. Wall.

When George married Ethie Maddern in 1889 – he aged 25, she 26 – they moved into 12 McKillop Street, Geelong, which in 1914 was renumbered 8 McKillop Street. His brother David lived next door to him on the left, 10 and later 6 McKillop Street, while on his right were his parents, although in Rates records their address, in their latter years, was variously given as Fenwick Street Geelong, Ocean Grove and Shepparton. Nearby in Fenwick Street was the workshop of T.T. Pescott and Sons, Builders, which passed to David and George, later to George's son Harold, and in turn to Harold's son Ed.

You will recall (P.P. 4) that George's sister Lil married Harry Morriss (1895) at George's residence and that the best man at that wedding was Harry's brother Fred. Well, Fred married Ethie (Maddern) Pescott's sister Mabel Maddern in 1901. Fred Morriss was 22 and Mabel Maddern was 24 at the time of Lil Pescott and Harry Morriss's wedding. Do you reckon Fred and Mabel might have met at that wedding? Some Pescotts remembered their great-uncle Fred to have been a 'queer sort of a bloke'. Some Morrisses don't recall their great-uncle Fred at all, because Harry and Fred became bitter enemies and didn't speak to each other in their last 25 or so years. Such is life – unfortunately.

So, how do the grandchildren of that wonderful man, George William Pescott, remember him?

First, let your imagination take over. Some time in the mid-1900s you are boarding a train (steam) at Warrnambool on a two-hour journey with your family to Geelong to see your Grandma and Grandpa. 'It's going to be a long time before we get there. See what you can see out the window.' And your parents grimace at Terang with the inevitable, 'Are we nearly there yet?' And the performance is repeated at Camperdown and at Colac. 'When are we going to get there?' 'Soon. Be patient.' Past Winchelsea and Moriac and over the Torquay Road at Grovedale – 'Not far now'. Magic words and the anticipation builds, and builds more as the train slows down and you cross the Barwon on a wide arc that takes you to South Geelong.

The train slows further as it crosses the bridge over Moorabool Street and passes Kardinia Park. 'Watch carefully for Grandma. There she is at the crossing gates! Give her a wave.' And you squeal with uncontrollable excitement. More excitement: 'Put the window down, or you'll get soot in your eyes. We're coming to the tunnel'. Darkness, internal resounding sound, and you can smell the smoke from the engine. A few seconds deep beneath Matthew Flinders School, another second for your eyes to readjust to the light, and you are pulling up at the station. 'There's Grandpa! Open the window and call to him.'

Something like that was the experience of the Shepherd children. Their early memories of travelling to see their grandparents is as integral a part of their memory of them as mine are of the horse and buggy ride to visit my grandparents.

George and Ethie's youngest daughter, Mary, was living at home in McKillop Street working as a music teacher when she met, fell in love 'over the picket fence', and later married, Keith Shepherd, a technical school woodwork teacher who was boarding nearby. Keith subsequently transferred to Warrnambool where he stayed for the next forty years.

It is said that the most primitive of our senses is the sense of smell, and that scents in adulthood can evoke some of our earliest memories. For Fay 'the smell of a greenhouse even now reminds me of

McKillop Street'. George's greenhouse with its ferns was special; and the ferns live on. Geoff and Carol have fine maidenhairs that originated from George's greenhouse. Beryl also has two plants from one of George's ferns – a fern with 'an unusual frill at the end of each frond'. Does that description identify a particular fern, Trevor? (For Pescottians who have lost contact with Geelong, Trevor Pescott is a field naturalist who writes a weekly nature column in the Geelong Advertiser.) John remembers the fern house for a different reason. One hot day he called at Grandpa's 'and, finding no-one home, could not resist the temptation to cool off in [the tank that collected water for Grandpa's plants] ... rudely brought back to earth by the indignant voice of Uncle Dave demanding, over the intervening fence, what on earth he was up to and remove himself immediately'.

Further down the back yard was the woodshed – a large chopping block in the middle surrounded by only woodchips, and the chopped wood neatly stacked by the walls. George was a 'place for everything, and everything in its place' man. He was noted for his meticulous work. He was 'a consummate tradesman', who always kept his tools in top condition. In the Geelong News of the Week edition of 28.1.1888 it was recorded that G.W. Pescott was a successful exhibitor at the Gordon Technical College. The medal he received then for Architectural Drawing is still a prized possession amongst Gwen's small collection of 'Grandpa Pescott' memorabilia. The Gordon buildings in Fenwick Street opened in November 1887. Presumably, the medal giving was part of the official opening ceremony and featured the work of the already-enrolled 300 students.

Included in that collection is a letter from 1920 in which George touchingly describes the feelings of love that he and Ethie had for one another. Such is life – thankfully.

And the firm's workshop! What a fascination it held for grandchildren – the machines, the tools, the benches, the busyness, the noise, the smell of sawdust; the balcony from where you could watch the workers, the industry, the honest toil that has always been the backbone of a community. But what was the best of all in the eyes of youngsters? The wood shavings.

'See who can find the longest one.' 'Can you unwind this one without breaking it?' And one little girl collected shoulder-length curls of wood and put them on her head pretending to be her film idol, Shirley Temple.

The grandchildren were encouraged to build things with timber off-cuts, a few simple tools and a handful of nails. One, in her reveries, still rides the hobby horse Grandpa built for her.

George was a builder and he worked on many of Geelong's building projects of the day and he gave details of what to look for to his grandchildren as they travelled Geelong's trams to the terminus of each tram route. If he felt pride in what he himself built, he would have kept that pride well under control. He possibly would have reminded himself constantly that Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall (Proverbs 17: 18), and that He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts (Luke 1: 51). Merylyn attests to George's 'amazing knowledge of the Bible and [he] could give verse, chapter and book of any passage you wanted to explore'.

(I don't have that sort of knowledge, but I do have a coverless copy of Cruden's Concordance, 36th edn, 1875, that Gran Lil (Pescott) Morriss gave me. She hoped that it would become a tool of trade for me – not to be. I vaguely remember her telling me that the book had belonged to her father. Who, beside sister Wyn, is going to question the accuracy of my wishful thinking?)

If you went to church with Grandpa at Noble Street, you sat in the pew with his name on it. After church, you walked a couple of hundred metres to Latrobe Terrace, turned left, went north up the hill and crossed the road to McKillop Street. As you crossed the wide, bluestone pitched gutters bordering the Terrace, Grandpa would gallantly help Grandma and you to make the crossing.

George had a sense of humour not unlike his sister Lil's. At Christmas Day dinner, he'd produce a hidden pound note from his sleeve supposedly from the Christmas pudding, while the children could find only threepenny pieces. He had a way with shy head-nodding children that worked. He'd put out a row of pennies, and when the shy one answered in words, he'd transfer a penny to the shy one, who found that speaking really paid. And he could take a joke, too. He was not allowed to forget his fine for jay-walking – he such an upright and law-abiding man. And he admitted to being thwarted by an erring

apprentice who he had set the task of sorting out nails he had tipped on the floor as a mild punishment. The apprentice used a magnet to pick up the nails, and the chore lost its bite. George admitted that he'd been 'blinded by science'.

Old enough to be embarrassed, but not quite old enough to appreciate the opportunity of hearing her retired grandfather as a guest speaker at a Sunday School assembly, Gwen was relieved when he spoke so well; and she remembers his message: think and pray for others, not yourself. During the address George recalled how once he had prayed for a yellow dress for his mother.

George and Ethie had been married for 65 years when George died at the age of 91. Very often, the first funeral people attend is that of a grandparent. Such was the case for Marilyn. During the service, the congregation sang George's favourite hymn, 'It Passeth Knowledge, That Dear Love of Mine'. The words of the hymn enabled her 'to say goodbye to my grandpa and look forward to the future'.

It is official. The Pescott–Dean Family Reunion will take place during the first weekend in April (6th & 7th) 2002. The date chosen is the closest to the 150th anniversary (the sesquicentenary— lovely word that, isn't it?) of the wedding of our ancestors in common, Thomas Trewitt Pescott and Mary Ann Dean on the 9th of April 1852 at Gosforth, Northumberland, England. They were married at Easter, but Easter falls early next year, in March.

Please let me know soon how many in your household/family and other contacts who, in principle, intend to attend, so that preliminary planning can proceed.

The venue will be the Noble Street Uniting Church, Newtown, Geelong, the name of which could be changed by now, since the Noble Street and Pakington Street churches have amalgamated, 'Pako' having been sold off. You will remember, won't you, that it was Tom Pescott who was the contractor who built the Pakington Street church which opened in 1877? Doubtless, Tom would have thought that the church would be a Methodist church for centuries to come, if not 'for ever'. It is timely to reflect on what it is that survives over centuries, let alone millennia. I doubt that it is institutions, for instance, but I suspect some of you will dispute that opinion.

The following in-principle decisions have been made:

- The main get-together will take place between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday the 6th of April in the Sunday School Hall. There will be provision for young children, and the venue is wheelchair friendly.
- A buffet lunch will be catered for at the hall.
- With the cooperation of the minister, a commemorative church service will be held at 10 a.m. in the church on Sunday.
- We would dine together on Saturday evening informally at a restaurant that caters for group bookings such as Smorgy's on Cunningham Pier.

We envisage that displays of photos, memorabilia and site maps of family-significant locations such as houses, other buildings and graves will be on display on the Saturday. One suggestion that the committee hopes would find favour with a goodly number of attendees is a nostalgic sing-along capturing the colour of the late 1800s and early 1900s (no! that's before my era).

We invite suggestions from everyone as to what you would like to occur at the reunion.

Some little time ago independent of, and unknown to, us at Geelong, George Stevens—second son of Cecily (Pescott) Stevens, in turn daughter of James Richard Pescott, 4th son of Tom and Mary Pescott—had started on a quest similar to that of our own. Having taken part in, and organised, family and organisation reunions, George was a step or two ahead of us, and has given us a welcomed fillip. We have co-opted him on to the organising committee, and we have promised him a Vegemite sandwich and half a lamington to go with his cup of tea when he arrives.

He has been family conscious for some time and has kindly sent us copies of more than a dozen photos covering 4 generations and an especially interesting one of James's home in Melbourne built by the Pescott Brothers in the early 1900s. George's largesse in sharing what he knows and has is refreshing. I invite others to do likewise.

In a similar vein, Beth Beynon, via Richard Thomas Martin Pescott to Joseph Dene Pescott, has kindly lent me an unpublished autobiography of her father, RTM. (The spelling of 'Dene' is not an error. I made the error of recording him as 'Dean' in an earlier paper. More of that story at a later date.)

The committee has decided that all descendants of Tom and Mary Pescott are of equal value and that the reunion should mirror that mindset. Having said that, it is interesting to note in passing that RTM was one of (at least) three Pescotts to have had an entry in Who's Who in Australia. Do you know who the other two were? This is a lead to those who would like to do their own research.

Should anyone like to know more of me and my family, I'd be happy to send them a publication I put out eight years ago commemorating the life of my first wife, Barbara.

It has occurred to me that there are perhaps some of the 5th, even the 4th, generation who aren't completely familiar with the 2nd generation. At times I have written as if everyone were. To make amends I have included photographs of the Pescott family taken in the late 1890s or early 1900s. So far as I know, these photos were handed down to sister Wyn from Grandma Lilius Jane (Pescott) Morriss via my mother Lilius Merle (Morriss) Wall.

Left Photo

Lower left The matriarch: Mary Ann Dean, b 20.8.1833, Newcastle, England; m T.T.P. 9.4.1852, Gosforth, England; d 17.9.1919, Geelong. Mary is holding a photo of her 2nd daughter Mary Ann ('Polly') Pescott, b 1854, Newcastle, d 1869, Geelong.

Lower right Elizabeth Manners (Pescott) Hales, b 3.1.1853, Newcastle, d 22.10.1918, Mooroopna, V.

Top left Fanny Wailes (Pescott) Purvis, b 29.5.1860, Geelong, m 1890, Geelong, d 12.5.1944, Brighton, Melb.

Top right Lilius Jane (Pescott) Morriss, b 29.6.1868, Geelong, m 2.8.1895, d 21.12.1957.

Right Photo

Bottom middle The patriarch: Thomas Trewitt Pescott, b 2.2.1828, Newcastle, England, d 29.8.1910, Geelong.

Bottom left James Richard Pescott, b 7.4.1866, m 1.3.1893 Ettie A. Woodfull, d 1957, Melbourne.

Bottom right David James Pescott, b 13.7.1862, m 4.2.1885 Laura E. Grix, d 8.9.1947, Ballarat.

Top left Edward Edgar Pescott, b 11.12.1872, m. 24.5.1906 Violet J. Furphy, d 31.7. 1954, Camberwell, Melb.

Top middle Joseph Dene Pescott, b 20.10.1869, m 22.10.1896 Emily A. Martin, d 20.7.1917, Melbourne.

Top right George William Pescott, b 18.3.1864, m 6.11.1889 Ethie E.A. Maddern, d 1.5.1955, Geelong.

All five sons above were born in Geelong.

Not photographed Thomas Blenkinsop Shalimar Pescott, b 1857 at sea, d 3.6.1878, Echuca, Victoria.

Up to now you have been sent information about Thomas senior, Lilius Jane, Thomas junior, George William and David James. I am currently putting something together on James Richard—well behind a schedule I set myself last year. Please, if you have information, photos and especially memories of Joseph and Edward send them to me as soon as possible.

For my part, I remember Uncle Dave and Uncle George from Noble Street Church days, but I have no specific memories of them. I do, however, remember quite clearly an occasion when I met Uncle Ted. I will relate the memory of that meeting when I put together a paper about him.

Slowly, but perhaps inevitably, I am coming to the decision that a history of the Pescott family should be written, and unless someone else chooses to do so, I suppose I should attempt it. I envisage a book in which EVERY descendent of Tom and Mary Pescott, up to the time of writing, would be represented by a mini-biography. For that to happen I would have to have the willing cooperation of every recipient of this letter.

What I would like to happen is for us all to start now to put together the stories that provide

biographical information of 3rd and 4th generation Pescotts. We already have a start with the autobiography I mentioned earlier of Richard Thomas Martin Pescott. Are there diaries still extant of other descendants of Tom and Mary? My and Wyn's mother kept diaries for years, but unfortunately we feel she wished them to go with her and she must have destroyed them only a little time before she died, for we never found them.

I still need more feedback on the names of the people in the photo taken at David James and Laura Pescott's wedding anniversary. I'll give you an update in the next paper.

Pescott Papers 6 – Thomas Blenkinsop Shalimar Pescott

The first-born son of Thomas and May Pescott was Thomas Blenkinsop Shalimar Pescott. He was remembered for having been born on board the *Shalimar*, the ship on which the Pescotts migrated to Australia in 1857 – hence his name. The ‘Blenkinsop’ possibly comes from his uncle’s (James Richard Dean) wife, Mary Ann Blenkinsop.

Research

1 Pioneer Index Victoria (1836–1888)

		Father	Mother	Bth Place	Year	Reg. No.
Birth	Pescott Thomas Bleukensop	Thomas Trewitt	Mary Ann Dean	Sea	1857	15485
Death	Pescott Thomas Blenkinsop	Thomas Frederic	Mary Ann Dean	Sea	1878	5012

The two spelling mistakes are transcription errors. Since the Pioneer Index did not include the name ‘Shalimar’, and because we did not have confirmation of birth and death dates, copies of his registered birth and death entries were needed.

2 Birth entry 1837, no. 15485

When, where	Name	Father	Where, when married Issue	Mother	Registration
29.10.1857 At sea, ship <i>Shalimar</i>	Thomas Blenkinsop Shalimar	Thomas Trewitt Pescott Cabinet maker 27, Newcastle	April 1832, Gosforth Northumberland Elizabeth Manners, 4 Mary Ann, 2	Mary Ann Pescott nee Dean, 24 Newcastle upon Tyne, England	10.12.1857 Geelong

There is no doubt about his three given names. The informant was Mary Ann Pescott of Clarendon Street, Chilwell. Mary had actually spelt her surname ‘Prescott’ (!) and had crossed out the ‘r’. Since the family had arrived in November, 1857, and were already in a private dwelling in early December, it is clear that their (unknown) sponsor must have arranged a house for them, and had a job lined up for Tom. Tom is referred to as an ‘engaged tradesman’ in the *Shalimar*’s passenger list.

3 Rates records 1857–58

Thomas Pescott was the occupier (probably as a tenant) of a two-roomed weatherboard house in Clarendon Street, Chilwell. The next Pescott entry is for 1860–61, when the Pescotts dwelt in a three-roomed house in Latrobe Terrace owned by Thomas Peters.

4 Death entry 1878, no. 5012

Where died	When	Name & Prof.	Cause	Informant	Burial
Wesleyan parsonage Annesley Street Echuca	3.6.1878	Thomas Pescott Teacher	Phthisis Several months	Isabella L. Grove Friend Annesley Street Echuca	Eastern Cemetery Geelong 5.6.1878

On the 5th of June, the registrar added: ‘For Thomas Pescott in 3rd column read Thomas Blenkinsop Shalamar (sic) Pescott’. His father is recorded as: ‘Thomas Trewick (sic) Pescott, builder’.

5 Teaching record of Thomas Pescott

Since Thomas died in Echuca, and he was a teacher, the Education Department’s History Unit would have this information on his record.

(Just ‘Thomas’; he kept his other given names quiet – well, wouldn’t you? Later on, two of his younger brothers were happy to divulge their full names when they, too, became teachers: James Richard and Edward Edgar).

Thomas became a pupil-teacher, VI Class on probation, on 16.8.1871, at the age of 13 years 9 months (!) at Wesleyan School, No. 150, Chilwell held in the Noble Street Church Sunday School, Saffron Street. Later, after the Education Act of 1872, when education became free, compulsory and secular, the Wesleyan School and the nearby Church of England school, St Peters, combined to form the new State School, No. 2061, Chilwell.

His probationary period ended on 1.10.1874, but he failed his first attempt at the exams for 3rd Class. Nevertheless, Inspector Baldwin recorded that Thomas was: Efficient – teaches and manages with great ability. In the following year, Inspector Swindley was not so sure. He said Thomas was Promising.

At the end of 1875, Thomas was still pending the subject 'Art of Teaching' for both his 3rd and 2nd Class, but he appears to have passed both subjects at supplementary exams, for he was classified 2nd Class from 1.1.1876. Continuing the pattern set, Thomas failed for 1st Class in the December 1876 exams. He was still pending his bogey subject, Art of Teaching, for 1st Class at the end of 1877.

He was absent through illness (he had a medical certificate) from the beginning of 1878, on full pay until the end of April and on half pay thereafter. His record ends with *Died 3 June 1878*.

During his seven years of teaching, Thomas's younger siblings with the possible exception of Fanny (in the early days of School 150 no girls were enrolled) and Edward (he was only 4 years old in 1877) would have had their older brother as their teacher – what I would give to know what they thought of him in that role and how those school-based relationships impacted on their home life!

Thomas did all his teaching at School 150, so how did he come to die at Echuca? The answer lies in the address at which he died and the name of the informant at the registration of his death: Isabella Grove of the Wesleyan Parsonage, Echuca. Perhaps the Rev. Grove had been Noble Street's minister. Is it recorded in Ted's booklet on the history of Noble Street Church?

6 Centenary of Noble Street Church, 1949, a history written by E.E. Pescott

Bingo! The minister of Noble Street Wesleyan Church in 1877 was T. Grove. What do we know of him?

7 Grove family

From the Pioneer Index we learn that Thomas Grove (b. 1843, Dublin) married Isabella Lewis Woods (b. 1850, Liverpool) in 1868, and that they had children born at Growlers Creek (near Bright), Bellarine, Colac, Geelong and Ascot Vale. It was normal for ministers to stay about two years in one position. The Geelong child, Ella Grove, was born in 1878 (and died in Echuca in 1880).

My guess is that soon after the birth of Ella, her father was posted to Echuca. Tom Pescott, senior, was superintendent of the Sunday school, hence would have been on good terms with the minister. Tom would have been advised that the only possible cure for Thomas's chest complaint (phthisis = tuberculosis) was for him to go to a warmer climate, and the Grove family said, 'We'll look after him. Send him up to us. It's warm up here.' The Grove family, in a new posting with a newly born child and three other children, were willing to take in a dying youth – it's impossible not to feel a warmth for the Groves. And they knew tragedy; a two-year-old daughter had died at Colac 3 years previously, and, as I have mentioned, Ella was also to live only 2 years.

Speaking generally and figuratively, not only do we need to say 'Sorry' for the sins of our fathers (it seems to me), but just as importantly, every now and then we need to say 'Thank you' to the friends of our fathers.

8 A tangential issue, or, a trivial pursuit

The *Shalimar* was a state-of-the-art clipper built in 1854 at St John, Nova Scotia for the White Star line of Wilson and Pilkington, Liverpool. As a Royal Mail carrier (of 1557 tons), it incurred a penalty of £100 a day for every day it took over 68 days for the Liverpool to Melbourne run. It could cover 420 miles in a day. In 1858, a Captain Brown was in charge of the ship, which boasted a piano, a library and linen for the use of its passengers. And – was this what attracted the Pescotts? – a 'cow for the use of saloon passengers'; I suppose for its milk.

9 Now, this is real trivial pursuit material

So you think Thomas and Mary were slightly insensitive in naming their son after a ship? Well, they were not alone. Between 1836 and 1888, 2120 children were born at sea as their parents migrated to Victoria – a risky start to life, for 900 immigrants died at sea during the same period, very few of whom were adults. I estimate that about 10%–20% of the babes born at sea were named, in part at least,

after the ship they were on.

There were five other *Shalimars* born at sea: one, Edward John *Shalimar* Cunningham, 1857, was a shipmate of Thomas Blenkinsop *Shalimar* Pescott; in 1855 there was Mary Harriet *Shalimar* Lockley; 1856, Mary *Shalimar* Baird; 1862, Anne *Shalimar* Rose (she lived for only a week); and in 1867 *Shalimar* Greiner was born.

Here's a small sample of people, all born at sea and named after the ship they were born on, who may not have thanked their parents for their choice of names.

John *Saldanha* Russell, *Marco Polo* Luke, Mary *Arabia* Skinner, *Mataoaka* Patterson, *Mindoro* Siddall, *Mermaid* Alice Lydia Booth, *Neptune* Fred Christoe, *Royal Charter* Bertha Franz, Fanny *Cyclone* Window, George Enright *Lightning* Hollingworth, Harry *Albatross* Patrick, Henry *Persia* McDougall, James *Kohinoor* Russell, James *Potosi* Edwards, *Almora* Mary Leach, Annie *Goldfinder* Harber, Thomas *Tornado* Furlong, *Strathfieldsaye* Harrison.

10 More trivia

What happened to E.J. *Shalimar* Cunningham, I wonder. The Cunninghams landed at Geelong and were living at an 'Immigration Depot', when they, too, registered their son's birth at the same time as Mary Ann registered Thomas junior. The Cunninghams possibly went interstate, for there is no Victorian record of their fate, but *Shalimar's* mother remarried in 1889, and, as Ellen Spear, died aged 93 in 1930.

Pescott Papers 7 – David James Pescott (5th born)

GOLDEN WEDDING

Celebrated by Mr. and Mrs.

D. J. Pescott

This was the heading of an article in the *Geelong Advertiser* of 4 February 1935. Included in the article are the following details:

- Mrs Pescott was Miss Laura Elizabeth Grix.
- They were married on 4.2.1885.
- They were married at the bride's parents' home in Nicholas Street, Chilwell.
- The marriage was performed by the Rev. Thomas Anderson.
- The bridesmaid was Lil Pescott (later Mrs Harry Morriss).
- The best man was George Pescott.
- Relatives only attended a tea and social evening in the Noble Street Methodist Church Sunday School Hall.
- On Sunday 46 representatives of the family attended a family service at the church.
- [And I add with due decorum that:] Mrs Pescott wore a graceful frock of mauve satin printed with a tiny design in white, with a smart black silk coat, and black hat, trimmed with tiny beige velvet flowers. [It is apparent from an accompanying photo of the couple that David wore a suit.]
- Mr and Mrs Dave Pescott lived at 'Somerville', McKillop Street.

Elva [Sterrit] Pescott has sent me a photo of a group of 47 (including David and Laura Pescott) who were present at the gathering. The *Addy* article lists 45 people who were 'among those present'. As you can see, the three numbers noted don't necessarily coincide, but there must be a large percentage of overlap. If you can identify any of the group, please write to me with details (my secretarial skills don't do justice to phoned information).



The article provides first given names only of the unmarried, and gives initials only of the married. I have supplied the full names and their ages at 4.2.1935 (question marks indicate that I don't have birth dates).

probables and guesses, e.g. my guess is 26 is Fanny Wailes (Pescott) Purvis.

Ten years after the Golden Wedding Anniversary, the Geelong Advertiser ran another story:

DIAMOND WEDDING

Mr and Mrs D.J. Pescott

Further details in the 1945 report included:

- David's parents, Tom and Mary Pescott, were living in Pakington Street at the time of the wedding.
- David was the secretary of the Geelong Master Builders' Association for 33 years.
- He was a life member Bareena Bowling Club [in Noble Street, Chilwell].
- He was a member of the Noble Street Methodist choir for 50 years and choirmaster for 40 years.
- He had a fine tenor voice.
- Laura (Grix) Pescott had taught at the Noble Street Sunday School for many years.
- David remembered vividly his parents' house in McKillop Street being pulled down to make way for the Western District railway being constructed.
- Dave and Laura's daughter Mrs F.T. Everett made the anniversary cake.
- Members of the family who attended the celebration were: Mrs F.T. Everett (Caulfield), Mr and Mrs T.H. Pescott, Mr and Mrs J.C. Gilbert and their family, Mr and Mrs D.M. Pescott and their family, Mrs H. Morriss, Mr G Pescott, Mrs W.H. Griffin (Ballarat), Mr J.R. Pescott (Melbourne), Mr E. Pescott (Melbourne), Mrs B. Grix, and Miss E.M. Grix.

More newspaper snippets featuring David James Pescott

The papers quoted from are the *Geelong Advertiser* and an early, now defunct, Geelong paper, the *News of the Week*.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 16.4.1887 | Dave is the librarian and treasurer of the Noble Street Methodist Church (NSMC). |
| 24.9.1887 | Dave sang at a Sons of Temperance meeting, as did his sisters Fanny and Lil. |
| 15.10.1887 | Dave sang at the annual Rechabites festivities. |
| 2.9.1889 | At a 22nd anniversary tea and concert of the Self-Reliance Tent IOR, Dave sang 'Alone on the Raft'. |
| 29.6.1889 | Dave conducted a special choir at a Gospel Temperance Mission. |
| 6.7.1889 | A solo by Dave was a highlight of the 17th anniversary of the Independent Order of Good Templars. |
| 13.7.1889 | A choir under Dave sang at a thanksgiving service by Loyal Orange Lodges and the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society. |
| 1888 | Dave was vice-chairman of the Geelong West Mutual Improvement Society. |
| 24.8.1889 | The Chilwell Free Library in Russell Street was officially opened. Both Dave and Lil sang at the ceremony. |
| 1892 | Dave's 'large and well-trained' church choir rendered the cantata 'The Holy City'. He was presented with a 'beautiful coffee service and cruet as a token of esteem for the services he had rendered as choirmaster' during the previous 5 years. |
| Dec. 1892 | While umpiring a cricket match, Dave was struck in the eye by a ball and was treated at the hospital. |
| 30.7.1892 | At an entertainment in aid of the funds of the Barwon Football Club, Dave sang the song Good Company 'with pleasing effect'. |
| 5.8.1893 | At an entertainment in aid of the funds of the Barrabool Branch of the Blue Ribbon Army, Dave and Lil 'gave an expressive rendition' of Life's Dream Is O'er. |
| Oct. 1894 | Dave chaired the Annual Meeting of the Chilwell Wesleyan Cricket Club. He was a member of the match committee and delegate to the Churches Association. In 1893 the |

club had won the inaugural association premiership.

1899 Dave was president of the Chilwell Football Club.

31.3.1910 Dave was presented with a gold pendant in recognition of 22 years as NSMC choirmaster.

Many other snippets similar to the above appear in the Geelong papers. Collectively, they paint a picture of an extraordinarily busy man, a man dedicated to his community, especially his church and its allied activities, to singing and to sporting pursuits. He was truly a worthy citizen.



David James Pescott with his grandson Ralph Elgar Pescott 1935

Pescott Papers 8

9.9.2001

375 Langs James Road

Balintore, 3254

Dear

Before Beth Beynon offered me a loan of her father's autobiography I wondered what I would be able to say about her grandfather Joseph Dene Pescott, since he died aged 48 in 1917. Fortunately for us, his son Dick Pescott included Information about his father.

In presenting a summary (with some commentary) of Richard Thomas Martin ('Dick') Pescott's book, we review, for the first time, the life of a 3rd generation Pescott. Have you ever said you needed two life times for everything you want to do? Dick actually went one better – he fitted three full careers in his lifetime, a phenomenal achievement.

I can add only one thing to Dick's memoirs. As an active member of the Zoo Board, in 1962 he persuaded the Board to abandon elephant rides at the Melbourne Zoo. Many at the time were disappointed to see Peggy and Betty's retirement.

Check out the identification of the folk in DJ Pescott's wedding anniversary group photo. There is some doubt whether 14 and 15 are correctly named. Surely the first five of the unidentified can be recognised by someone. Let me know please if you can.

The Reunion

Errol Woodard will act as MC on the Saturday, while Wynsome Penn will deliver the welcoming address. Errol is also compiling a list of Pescott grave sites in the Eastern, the Western and the Barrabool Hills cemeteries.

Fay Haywood is photographing Pescott homes and other 'Pescott' sites around Geelong. If there is sufficient interest, we could organise a tour to the sites and graves.

Wendy Gibson is compiling a list of all Pescotts who have been associated with Noble Street Church: members of the church, Sunday school, sporting and other associated bodies; those who were married there, and those whose funeral services were held there. Write to me with your memories or information on this matter, and I'll pass them on to Wendy.

Costs

George Stevens has undertaken to produce the Paper on his grandfather James Richard Pescott. He has already made an unsolicited donation to help defray costs (previously, I had turned down offers of donations). I want to be able to reimburse his costs, so if you wish to make a donation, I'll accept them with gratitude. (This letter cost \$1.58: env 4c, st 45c, paper 5c, ink, the big cost, \$1.04)

- 1 James Richard Pescott (68)
- 2 Thomas James Purvis
- 3 Howard Pescott (15)
- 4 William Harold James Griffin
- 5 James Cadogan Gilbert (46)
- 6 William Harold Griffin (44)
- 7 Harry Morriss (64)
- 8 Frederick Thomas Everett (48)
- 9 Keith David Everett (19)
- 10
- 11 Rev. J.C. Lawton
- 12
- 13 George William Pescott (70)

- 14 Janet Pescott (17)
- 15 Muriel Porter (?)
- 16 Meering Edith Pescott (15)
- 17 Winifred Mary Everett (16)
- 18 Bethwyn Edith Gilbert (16)
- 19
- 20
- 21 Ettie A. (Woodfull) Pescott (64)
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25 Hazeldean Morriss (34)
- 26 Edith Maude Emily (Mansell) Pescott (38)
- 27 Nellie Gertrude (Porter) Pescott (52)
- 28 Lillias Jane (Pescott) Morriss (66)
- 29 Fanny Wailes (Pescott) Purvis (74)
- 30
- 31
- 32
- 33
- 34 David Manners Pescott (44)
- 35 Thomas Howard Pescott (47)
- 36 David James Pescott
- 37 Laura Elizabeth (Grix) Pescott
- 38 Lizzie Dean (Pescott) Everett (49)
- 39 Vida Winifred (Pescott) Gilbert (45)
- 40 Lily Somerville (Pescott) Griffin (42)
- 41 Lillian Alice Pescott (?)
- 42 Laura Belle Griffin
- 43 Joyce Pescott
- 44 Ralph Elgar Pescott (7)
- 45 David Norman Pescott
- 46 John David Gilbert (?)
- 47 Robert James Gilbert

Still unidentified

Ethie E.A. (Maddern) Pescott (71)
Dorothy Woodfull (Pescott) Heathcote (40)
Emlie A. (Martin) Pescott (62)
Edward Edgar Pescott (62)
Violet J. (Furphy) Pescott (60)
Benjamin Currie Grix (76)
Mary S. (Dickson) Grix
Miss Grix
Mrs A. Taylor
Mrs A. Holdsworth
Mrs Lawton
Best wishes to all,
Wallace Wall

Pescott Papers 9 – Richard Thomas Martin Pescott, son of Joseph Dene

Pescott

Parents and grandparents

In December 1984 at the age of 79, and 14 months before he died, Richard Thomas Martin ('Dick') Pescott finished writing his *The Memoirs of a 'Naturalist'*, which he wished to be left unpublished. What follows is a condensed version of that illustrated 180-page autobiography of some 70 000 words. Dick, or as I will refer to him, 'RTM', was the six-years-younger brother of Joseph Martin Pescott, known as Martin; the two boys being the children of Joseph Dene Pescott and Emlie Ada Martin.

Joseph Dene Pescott (hereafter JD) was the ninth child of Thomas Trewitt Pescott (hereafter TT) and Mary Ann Dean. Of his father's second name 'Dene', RTM says, '...not to be confused with Dean...[Dene] was taken from the English village, Jesmond Dene, from where the parents came'.

Having access to Joseph Pescott's (TT's father) army discharge certificate, RTM noted that Joseph was 6 feet 3 inches tall, and that his own father, JD, and three of his brothers were over 6 feet and 'my brother Joseph Martin was 6 feet 4 inches and I was 6 feet 1 inch'.

RTM records that his grandfather, TT, was a director of the unsuccessful Chilwell Gold Mining Company of Geelong. '[I]t is certain that he lost a large amount of money in this venture. This...was to be the cause of much family wrangling later.'

[It is not clear which family RTM was referring to. The company was formed in 1878 and could not have lasted more than two years – there was no gold in Chilwell. In 1880 the oldest of TT's children, Elizabeth, was 27 and married to Fred Miles, daughter Mary and son Thomas were both dead, and the rest of the children ranged between 20, Fanny, and 8, Ted. It is difficult to see how their father's business could have impinged on TT's own children for them to be the wrangling parties, which suggests the family being referred to was of the same generation as TT. Who knows? W.W.]

JD was educated at the Chilwell and Flinders schools 'as were other members of the family'.

[I had always assumed that all the second-generation children attended only the Chilwell school, but when they lived in McKillop Street they would have been closer to Flinders. The original school, Flinders National Grammar School (1856) was a rarity – a non-secular school. I feel sure Tom and Mary would have chosen the Methodist school for their children in preference to a non-secular school, regardless of the non-secular school being closer. Chilwell State School opened in 1878, whereas Flinders National Grammar became State School 260 in 1880. In 1941 Flinders Primary School became Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary School.

When I started as a student teacher at Chilwell in 1948, Gran Morriss (= Lil Pescott) was thrilled because that was the school where she and her brothers had gone to school and where three of her brothers also started teaching careers – albeit short ones. W.W.]

Not being particularly interested in carpentry or teaching, the occupations his five brothers went into initially, JD sat successfully for the Victoria State Public Examination. On 26 March he began as an audit clerk in the State Audit Office with responsibility for examining 'accounts relating to special funds'.

It was when he was stationed at Bendigo that he met his future wife, Emlie Ada Martin, at the Golden Square Methodist Church. Her father, a Cornish migrant, was a mine manager. When married, in 1896, JD and Emlie settled in Malvern, which at that time was one of the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The church they attended, Spring Road Methodist Church, was to JD's family what Noble Street Methodist Church was to TT's family. JD was the choirmaster of the Young Men's Singing Club there.

JD's family made at least annual visits to Geelong to visit Pescott family, including spending time at TT's beach house at Ocean Grove. One of RTM's earliest memories was of playing with wooden blocks from the Pescott carpentry workshop on the deck of the 'Edina', a ship that plied between Melbourne and Geelong.

However, visits to his maternal grandparents in Bendigo were RTM's favourite. His grandfather Richard Martin had died in 1881, and his grandmother Joanna (Spargo) Martin opened a grocer's shop called Martin's Corner. [I wonder if this was the inspiration for the 1940s radio serial 'Martin's Corner'.] Young RTM enjoyed donning a white apron to serve in the shop, but his special memory was of driving a horse-drawn cart to deliver customers' orders.

Quoting RTM in full:

Of the greatest consequence was the death of my father on 20th July, 1917 at the age of 47 years, from a series of strokes. I was only 11 years of age at the time and my scanty recollections of my father were of him having a number of strokes over a period of several years and after some of the earlier illnesses, he had to be taken to the Malvern Railway Station by my mother, put on a train there to be met by a colleague at Flinders Street Station, and taken by him to the Audit Office in what is now the State Treasury in Spring Street. We still have in our possession a sovereign and a half sovereign which my mother gave to Gwyn and myself from my father's last pay, which she found in his pocket after his death.

Only three years previously the Pescott brothers from Geelong had built a new house, 'Gwennap' for JD at 39 Dixon Street, Malvern.

Schooling

RTM started school in 1911 at Little St Margarets, Malvern, a private school associated with the Presbyterian Church. He then transferred to Spring Road State School, Malvern in 1914, going into the 'scholarship class' [equivalent to today's Year 9] in 1918. He sat for seven scholarships to secondary schools and was successful in six of them. He chose a Rechabites Scholarship and went to Melbourne High School, but transferred to Wesley College in 1920. His best subjects were mathematics ones, and his sporting loves were football and cricket.

Having been advised that there was going to be a great future in agriculture by his headmaster, RTM repeated the Honour VI year [Year 12] taking in addition Leaving agricultural science. He was dux of the school in 1923 and was awarded a Free Place for the following year to study agricultural science at the University of Melbourne.

In 1923 RTM's first published piece of writing appeared in the Melbourne Herald – a short note about squirrels in the Malvern Gardens.

From 1924 to 1927 RTM studied science and agricultural subjects at Melbourne University and did practical work at the State Research Farm at Werribee. From 1928 to 1935 he was employed on an annual basis as a science field officer with the Department of Agriculture, during which time he took out a masters degree in agriculture. RTM's first permanent appointment, as Government Entomologist, came in 1935.

Private life

Spring Road Methodist was RTM's spiritual home up to the time of his marriage there. This is where RTM went to Sunday school, church and Christian Endeavour. Here he sang in the church choir as a bass, was Sunday School pianist and relieving church organist.

RTM was a member of the Spring Road Methodist Tennis Club from its inception in 1920 until 1933 and of its cricket team in 1932–3. He also played cricket for Malvern seconds in the sub-district association. Later when he played for Cooloongatta Road Methodist he shared a place in the team with his older brother, Martin Pescott. His best cricketing performance was in a match when he made 83 as a right-hand batsman, and took 8 wickets for 6 as a fast, left-handed bowler, for which he was awarded a Herald prize.

Associated with Sunday School anniversaries was a small orchestra composed of local musicians that included RTM on the piano, Horace Walduck on the flute and his daughter Gwynneth Mabel Walduck on the violin. This association of RTM and Gwyn Walduck culminated in their marriage on 15 April 1933. Soon after their marriage the couple built their home in Cooloongatta Road Camberwell where they lived until 1957, transferring to Cooloongatta Road Methodist Church.

Gwynneth Ann Pescott, known as Ann, was born on 19 June 1935, and a second daughter, another Gwynneth, Gwynneth Elizabeth, known as Beth, was born on 17 August 1939. Ann and Beth received most of their education at Korowa Church of England Girls Grammar School. Ann then went to Library Training School and later was medical librarian at Alfred Hospital. Beth went to Kindergarten Training College at Kew, later directing a number of kindergartens in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

Entomologist 1935–1944

As an entomologist, RTM was responsible, among other things, for collecting and identifying insects, a task in which his wife, Gwyn, helped. They often collected insects together on the eastern coastline of Port Phillip Bay among the banksias and tea-trees. Insects that had an economic impact, such as introduced scale insects, were the subject of special study. RTM's first research task was a study of the control of the codling moth, which was carried out over twelve years at Harcourt, a major apple-growing centre. His first published scientific paper was titled *Spraying Costs in Codling Moth Control*, J. Dept Agric. Vic, 1929. He went on to have about 60 scientific papers published in various journals.

It is significant that RTM described himself as a naturalist rather than, say, a scientist, for instance. He was as much at home exploring and camping out in much of country Victoria including early visits to the Australian Alps, Wilsons Promontory, the Mallee and the Otways as he was in the laboratory. A party of which he was a member collected hundreds of insect species at Mt Sabine in the Otways, including 50 species hitherto unknown in 1932.

His main job as entomologist was to study and devise ways of combating economically important insect pests. Besides the codling moth, RTM waged war on the oriental peach moth, cherry borer, red-legged earth mite, vegetable weevil, plague locust, woolly aphis, potato moth, carpet beetle, Argentine ant and sundry other insects. He was the first to write on the appearance of the cabbage white butterfly in Victoria in 1939. [One would have to say that the codling moth and cabbage white butterfly still have the upper hand in the on-going battle with home gardeners at least.]

Captain Pescott

As a scientist, RTM was in a reserved occupation and so was not liable to be called up into the armed forces. The Department of Agriculture concentrated its efforts on food production, and gave expert advice to the forces when asked. For instance, RTM was able to assure the forces that the pulverised feathers, which was an active ingredient in gas masks, was not susceptible to insect attack because of the charcoal powder mixed with the feather particles.

Of greater concern was the threat of malaria to Australian service personnel in the tropics, so that RTM's services were requested in establishing the 5th Mobile Entomological Unit under the control of the Australian Medical Corps in 1942. The units were travelling field laboratories manned by an entomologist and as few as two other soldiers.

RTM was seconded to the Australian Army with rank of captain, doing preliminary training at Darley, west of Melbourne. Posted to Bonegilla, RTM became a guinea pig in testing a new insecticide – DDT. Given that the use of this chemical would eventually be banned world wide because of its detrimental effects, it is worth quoting in full RTM's role.

As I had reported to Colonel Keogh that I was showing some physical effects following the spraying in an enclosed space, we decided to carry out some medical tests. I was admitted to the camp hospital for two days, during which regular routine checks were made – heart, blood pressure, pulse, lungs etc., to obtain the norm under ordinary conditions. I would then go into a room of known volume, spray the room out as if it was a routine spraying procedure against flies, then return to hospital for hourly checks as before. This went on for several weeks using various concentrations and times of spraying, and the results collated and sent back to Medical Headquarters in Melbourne. Although I never saw the final results, and I am sure they were never published, I know there were some changes in blood pressure and pulse rates that concerned them.

A stint in northern Western Australia followed in which RTM had the task of mapping the areas where *Anopheles* mosquitoes, the carriers of malaria, were active. His unit discovered two known carriers –

A. annulipes and *A. amictus*. *A. amictus* had not previously been recorded in that area. RTM speculated that many deaths among Aborigines in this area in the past that had been attributed to influenza were possibly due to malaria.

There followed a posting to New Guinea where he had similar duties, except there was an emphasis on camp hygiene.

In mid-July 1944 the Victorian Government requested RTM's release from the army to take up the vacant position of Director of the National Museum of Victoria in Melbourne. This request, with RTM's approval, was granted, and in being discharged from the army, RTM also ended 16 years of association with the Agricultural Department.

Director, National Museum 1944–1957

[The National Museum was essentially a natural history museum, hence RTM's suitability for the position. By contrast, the separate Science Museum was an applied science museum.]

RTM took over an institution in a bad state. The building was in urgent need of repair, many valuable collections were stored in damp conditions, staff were housed underground without ventilation, staff had low morale and officers worked as they pleased without supervision. The core reason for neglect was the fact that the trustees of the museum also had responsibility for the Public Library, the National Gallery and the Science Museum, the Library and Gallery attracting most attention.

When physical conditions at the museum and staff morale had improved, RTM involved himself in the work he loved best – the field collection of specimens. Two significant expeditions he went on were: to south-west New South Wales to collect Aboriginal implements in 1945; and across the Nullabor in 1947 in a team that included a forester, two botanists, a bird expert, a medical officer, two naturalists and an anthropologist.

Besides the practical duties he performed as director, RTM's horizons expanded because of other positions he held by virtue of his position as Director. They included being a member of:

- The Royal Society of Victoria. He was its treasurer between 1946 and 1956, its president in 1963 and 1964. In 1975 he was elected to Life Membership.
- The Zoological Board of Victoria for 20 years.
- The Museums Association of Australia, later being its president.
- Australian Committee for UNESCO, 1947 to 1957.
- Victorian Centenary Celebrations Committee.
- Council of Adult Education, 1947 to 1956.

As a member of the Zoo Board, he visited zoos overseas in 1948 and 1962 reporting on best zoo practice. One result was the commencement of moat enclosures being introduced to Melbourne in 1962.

RTM became accustomed to overseas travel, attending three conferences in 1948 as the Australian delegate to a Museums Association conference in Cardiff, an International Entomological conference in Stockholm and a Commonwealth Entomological conference in London. During his time in Europe he visited as many museums his schedule would allow, including a visit to the Linnaeus Museum near Uppsala in Sweden. [Linnaeus, the 'father' of modern biology introduced the two-word system of nomenclature used both in botany and zoology.]

On his stop over in the USA on his way back to Australia, RTM managed to visit another 61 galleries and museums. Connections he made there resulted in a number of significant acquisitions being made by the Museum.

RTM's association with UNESCO led to three innovative programs: the Museum's publication of handbooks on mammals and molluscs of Victoria; the organisation of a series of successful 'winter lectures' on natural history subjects (they attracted audiences of over 1000 mainly senior secondary school students); and participation in a major overseas travelling exhibition, 'The Culture of the

Australian Aborigine'. In addition, the Museum hosted a seminar, 'The Role of Museums in Education' in 1953 (RTM had taken part in the first demonstration of television at RMIT in 1950).

RTM continued to contribute articles to professional journals, and now turned to writing books. His first was *Collections of a Century*, a history of the first hundred years of the National Museum, published in 1954.

One thing arising from his 1948 tour that the Government acted on was RTM's recommendation that the National Museum should have its own board of trustees, as would the Science Museum. However, in 1983 the two museums were amalgamated under a single body of trustees with the new title 'Museum of Victoria'.

Director, Botanic Gardens 1957–1970

RTM wrote:

From the time that I was a young lad I regularly went collecting native orchids in the red gum forest at Ashburton right through to university days. I would always answer people who asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, with the simple statement – 'in charge of the Botanic Gardens'.

At a meeting of the trustees of the National Museum in 1957, it was announced that he had been appointed Director of the Botanic Gardens and Government Botanist.

The Botanic Gardens had been experiencing staff problems, and reading between his lines, it would appear that RTM's main qualification for his appointment was the organisational and leadership abilities he had shown at the Museum. Previous directors had held horticultural and teaching qualifications, compared with RTM's agricultural and entomological ones.

With the Governor of Victoria as their neighbour, the Pescott family moved into Gardens House in 1957, at which time they also transferred church membership to the Independent Church in Melbourne. The appointment and shift meant that Gwyn now had formidable responsibilities, for it was the role of the Director's wife to entertain dignitaries who were Government visitors. They included prime ministers and other parliamentarians, members of royal families, celebrities, scientists and directors of other gardens.

The Gardens was made up of the Botanic Gardens itself and a separate institution, the National Herbarium, which RTM undertook to place in an upgraded, 'correct scientific position in Australia'. Having made the judgment that Melbourne's Botanic Gardens ranked with the Royal Botanic in Kew, England, when he visited them in 1948, RTM made a case for Melbourne's Gardens to be renamed the 'Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne'. Approval for the change came through in 1958.

As had happened when he was at the National Museum, RTM became involved with a number of other bodies by virtue of his position, directly or indirectly, as Director of the Botanic Gardens. They included being:

- a trustee of the Maud Gibson Trust, which led to her bequeathing the Botanic Gardens Branch Research Trust, which prompted the successful application for the Gardens to qualify as 'an approved research institution' under the Income Tax Act;
- a member of the Rotary Club of Melbourne. RTM gave over 20 talks to various Rotary clubs;
- a member of the Koala Reserve Committee, which managed the growing koala population on Phillip Island;
- a member, and later, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation;
- a trustee for 20 years of the Necropolis Board of Trustees at Springvale. This Board also became responsible for the St Kilda and Melbourne cemeteries. RTM spent time as Chairman of the Board. One of the lawn areas on the northern slopes of the Springvale Cemetery is named the 'R.T.M. Pescott Lawn'; and
- for 28 years a member, with ten years as Secretary, of the Committee of Management of the Sir Colin MacKenzie Sanctuary, Healesville, until the Sanctuary was taken over by the Zoological Board of Victoria, a move that RTM thought was a major Government blunder at the time.

In 1964 RTM experienced what most writers only ever dream of – he was approached by the Manager of Penguin Books to write a book, one with the title *Gardening for Australians*. With variations, this episode was repeated in 1968.

[O]ne day a visitor called to see me at the Botanic Gardens and during our conversation the subject of books came up. I clearly remember him asking me what were the deficiencies in horticultural literature as I saw them, and after some thinking I said, 'Very little has been written about bulbs'. I remembered that many, many years previously a small paperback on growing bulbs had been written by my uncle, Edward Pescott, but had been out of print for over 40 years. To my amazement, my visitor said to me, 'Good – will you write a book on bulbs for us?', and he then told me he was the Managing Director for Thomas Nelson, Book Publishers in Melbourne, and guaranteed the production side would be good. I agreed to write this for him, but insisted that the illustrations should be in colour, and that there should be at least 25 colour plates. This was agreed to.

In the same year RTM wrote the first of his monographs in the *Life in Australia Series*, *Possums*. Others of his that followed in that series were *Platypuses* 1974, *The Sir Colin MacKenzie Sanctuary* 1974, and *Outdoor Recreation* 1975. He wrote *Royal Botanic Gardens, Guide Book*, 1st edition 1960; 2nd edition 1966. Between 1967 and 1970 RTM wrote eight book reviews, a task that he took seriously, for the journal *Australian Parks*.

Associated with visits by dignitaries were tree-planting ceremonies, some of which attracted large audiences. RTM was honoured on his retirement to plant a yellow tingle tingle, *Eucalyptus guilfoylei*, at the same time honouring William Guilfoyle, an earlier director who landscaped the gardens from 1873 to 1909. Two other trees that RTM officially planted were a cedar of Lebanon tree in Lincoln Square in Melbourne and a conifer in one of the Hawthorn reserves just north of the freeway at Kooyong.

Although no longer on the board of the Council of Adult Education, RTM continued his connection with that body by giving series of lectures on landscape gardening in Benalla.

In recent years (2000, 2001) fruit bats have been a major problem in some Melbourne gardens. In RTM's time at the Gardens, two other native species were pests. Cormorants used trees in the Gardens for resting at night, their droppings causing burning to foliage. With approval from all concerned authorities, culling of hundreds of cormorants by shooting was carried out. Possums were the other problem. They were damaging and destroying camellias, roses and gardenias. They were trapped and up to 150 a week were relocated at Yan Yean.

RTM considered 1962 as the busiest of his working years. This was when he attended two overseas conferences – the 2nd World Congress in Public Park Administration in London and the XVIth International Horticultural Congress in Brussels – as the Leader of the Australian Delegation. Taking annual leave to bridge the time between the two conferences, RTM and Gwyn were able to see something of Europe and visit relations on the Walduck and Martin sides of their families [it does not appear that they visited any Pescott sites]. During their site seeing they visited many parks and zoos – it was a real busman's holiday.

In 1965 RTM revisited New Guinea to attend the opening of the new Lae Herbarium. In that year he also attended the opening of the redesigned King's Park Botanic Gardens in Perth.

As a result of having given some horticultural advice in Canberra and having chaired a Parks Conference there, a road on the way to Yarralumla Nursery was named 'Pescott Lane'.

On the occasion of his retirement on his 65th birthday on 21 August 1970, an article featuring him appeared in the Melbourne Sun, written by columnist Keith Dunstan.

In retirement 1970–1986

RTM spent much of his retirement writing. Besides the publications already mentioned, he wrote *Gardening in Australia* 1971, *W.R. Guilfoyle, 1840–1912*, *The Master of Landscaping* 1974, and *The Australian Gardening Book* 1979. In 1980 he wrote six monographs for Curry, O'Neil: *600 Beautiful Shrubs for Australian Gardens*, *Grow Your Own Fruit and Vegetables for Australian Gardens*, *Design and Build an Australian Garden*, *500 Beautiful Flowers for Australian Gardens*, *200 Beautiful Trees for Australian Gardens*, and *Native Plants for Australian Gardens*. In 1982 *The Royal Botanic Gardens*,

Melbourne. A History from 1845 to 1970 was published. His last published book was written in conjunction with Nicholas Scott, *The Complete Book of Gardening for New Zealand* in 1985.

In retirement RTM continued to give expert advice to different bodies. These included:

- reporting possible remedial actions on park and garden problems to the City of South Melbourne;
- in conjunction with the Department of Crown Lands, RTM inspected different sites to become a native plants adjunct to the Botanic Gardens. One hundred and sixty hectares at Cranbourne were subsequently purchased and became known as the Botanic Gardens Annexe; and
- becoming an adviser on horticultural matters to the City of Doncaster and Templestowe.

Richard Thomas Martin Pescott died on Saturday, 22 February 1986, after suffering from arthritis for a number of years.

Pescott Papers – 10 November 2001

Elizabeth Manners Pescott

Elizabeth Manners Pescott, the first child of Thomas Trewitt Pescott and Mary Ann (Dean) Pescott, was born on the 3rd of January 1853 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland, England. She was 4 years old when her family migrated to Geelong in the colony of Victoria in 1857. At the age of 26, she married Frederick George Miles in Geelong, in 1879. They had no children. Frederick died in Bendigo in 1894 at the age of 38. ‘

Three years later, when Elizabeth was 44, she married Edmund Frederick Hale(s), a Londoner by birth. There were no children from this marriage either. Elizabeth died of pneumonia after a bout of influenza, aged 65, in Mooropna in 1918, while Edmund died in Geelong in 1931.

Elizabeth Manners was Elizabeth's paternal grandmother's name—hence (probably) her given names. Her maternal grandmother was also named Elizabeth (Clarke), so the 'Elizabeth' served two purposes.

Mary Ann Pescott

If little is known about Elizabeth, less is known about Mary, since she died of typhoid fever in Geelong when only in her 15th year on 4.11.1869. Like Elizabeth, Mary was born in Newcastle – a year later in 1854 – and was 2 years old when the journey to Australia was made. Mary's given names were those of her mother, “N Mary Ann Dean, and to distinguish her from her mother was known as ‘Polly’.

The name ‘Pescott’

On Mary Ann ('Polly') Pescott's death certificate, her father's name is recorded as Thomas Trewick Pescott, 'Trewick' being the spelling found in English records. Interestingly, the registrar had twice spelt the surname 'Pescatt', before correcting it, suggesting the pronunciation used by Thomas in providing his own surname gave stress to the initial syllable, 'Pes', only. It seems unlikely that a person hearing the current pronunciation with equal stress to both 'Pas' and 'cott' would write 'Pescatt'. The surname variation 'Peskett' has stress on the first syllable only—which leads us to consider the derivation of 'Pescott'.

We should not forget that our family name, historically speaking, is more correctly 'Pescod'. Thomas T. Pescott's father, Joseph, joined the army as 'Joseph Pescod' and was discharged six years later as 'Joseph Pescott', possibly to distinguish him from a cousin or cousins also named 'Joseph Pescod'. This means that if you ever do a sentimental journey to Durham and Northumberland, you would be wasting most of your time tracking down the Pescotts' there; rather, check out the Pescods for kinship. The father of Joseph Pescod Pescott (1786–1843) was also named Joseph Pescod (b 1760, d ?).

In a recent UK phonebook survey of the 16 000 most frequent surnames, Pescod is still common in the Newcastle and Durham areas, but only there; while Pescott is common only in the Brighton area on the south coast. (A surname had to have a frequency of at least 4 per 100 000 names in at least one particular phone area to be deemed common.)

Some genealogists, rather than search for pedigree ancestors, search worldwide for people with the same surname. The resulting one-name studies normally incorporate spelling variations. The one-name study that includes 'Pescott' is the Darwin-based Peasecod One-name Study; 'Peasecod' predates both 'Pescod' and 'Pescott', and includes the variants 'Peascod', 'Peasecode', 'Peascod', 'Pescud', 'Peskett' as well as 'Pescod' and 'Pescott'. I have yet to contact any member of that study» group who has information on our line. It is possible that names such as 'Peas(e)good(e)'t are also 'variants of 'Peasecod'. The earlier spelling, 'Peasecod', shows clearly the origin of the word, hence of the surname. A pease-codd was a pea-bag, or, a peapod; so that the original person, Peasecod, was either a seller or a grower of peas. incidentally, the Old English word 'pease' (= 'peose') was a singular noun. Because the word sounded plural, 'pea' was a back formation of later years. Had we retained the original we would talk of a single pease and several peases (more likely, 'pease' would be treated like the word 'oats').

Pease porridge hot
Pease porridge cold
Pease porridge in the pot
Nine days old.

It is unknown whether there was a single person who took the name 'Peasecod', or whether several people, independently and unrelated, took the surname. There is some evidence (at least there is a claim made by heraldists) that the original peapodding person came from Wales. British surnames date only from the Norman invasion of the eleventh century, when for taxing purposes the Domesday Book was compiled, but it wasn't until the fifteenth century that the practice of using surnames was well-established in Britain. 'Peasecod' is said to have had its origins in the thirteenth century.

Let's say, for convenience, that the first Mister Peasecod (it would have been a male we are surmising) was born in 1200, then we and all people with variant-spelt surnames and their descendants who were born around the mid-20th century would be 27th (plus or minus 2) great-grandchildren of the said Mr Peasecod, and everyone of those descendants would be 28th, or closer, cousins. This calculation is based on there being 4 generations to the century, resulting in 30 generations since Mr Peasecod plied his peases. I have read the claim that everyone alive today is at least a 50th cousin to every other person living (I've yet to read the basis for the calculation, so can't comment on its validity). It is sobering to think that groups such as the Taliban or individuals like the Port Arthur killer are all my cousins.

The following paragraph is included for the benefit of only those who enjoy solving dilemmas. So, our patronymic patron Peasecod is generation 1 and we are, for argument's sake, generation 30.

At generation	29	we have	2	parents
At generation	28	we have	4	grandparents
	27		8	great grandparents
	26		16	second gr-grs
	25		32	third gr-grs
	24		64	fourth gr-grs.

Now, do your own arithmetic, or take mine for granted:

At generation 1 we have 536870912 twenty-seventh great-grandparents. Here is the 1st dilemma: population experts agree that around the year 1200 there were only about 400 000 000 people in the whole world, a few million of those living in Britain. The foregoing calculations are not specific to Pescottonians; they apply with equal validity for every person alive today. How can it be that any person has more ancestors back in 1200 than there were people alive at the time (I can assure you that spare male ribs were in short supply by that stage)?

Perhaps Polly Pescott preferred planting, picking and podding peas to pondering preposterous posers.

Fanny Wailes Pescott

With Elizabeth (b 1853) and Polly (b 1854), being born in Newcastle, England, and Thomas Blenkinsop Shalimar being born at sea on the way to Australia in 1857, Fanny Wailes was the first of Tom and Mary's children to be born in Australia, at Geelong in 1860.

I have said that the first born, Elizabeth Manners Pescott, was probably named after her maternal grandmother, but she could equally have been named after her aunt also named Elizabeth Manners Pescott (b 1826). The older Elizabeth Manners Pescott, two years older than Thomas Trewitt, was married to a man named Wailes. That is all we know of him. Presumably, that is where Fanny Wailes got her second name.

The name Wailes is, and was in the 1800s, reasonably common in the Newcastle area. William Wailes was famous in early and middle 1800s as a stained-glass artisan. Churches throughout England, of all denominations, still display pride in the beauty of their Wailes windows. BUT, I can't establish a connection between William Wailes and the older Elizabeth Manners Pescott's husband.

If Fanny went to school, it would have been at Chilwell. Chilwell School's early records no longer exist,

so we can't check the accuracy of my previous assertions that all the second generation Pescotts went there (or to the earlier parochial Wesleyan School held in the Noble Street Sunday School hall where we will be holding the April 2002 reunion). Fanny, like others of her siblings, had a fine singing voice, and is recorded in Geelong papers of the era as having sung solo at church gatherings.

Pescott Papers 11 – James Richard Pescott

This PP is a little different from all its predecessors which were created by that diligent researcher and prolific journalist Wal Wall. Wal recklessly entrusted the creation of this PP to George Stevens. George has neatly overcome all possible problems by recruiting much assistance of his first cousins, in particular Judith Pescott and Norma Oakley to produce the following PP of James Richard Pescott.

James Richard was the 4th son, 7th child, born to Thomas T. and Mary A. Pescott on 7th April 1866 in the fair city of Geelong Victoria. The earliest record we have of James is dated 29th day of June 1866, when he was almost 3 months old. This is a Certificate of Successful Vaccination attested at Chilwell by one James Pincott, the Medical Officer for Ashby and Kildare. It is not known what James was vaccinated against, but perhaps small pox.

The next record is dated at Geelong on the 31st Day of May 1877. This certificate number 18023 was issued by the Victorian Education Department, signed by J Baldwin, Inspector, and 'is a Certificate of a Child being Sufficiently Educated up to the standard of Education required by the "Education Act 1872". At this time James would have been 11 years of age.

It seems that James was attracted to class room activities. The Victorian Education Department Roll number 2061, Chilwell State School has some relevant entries. Firstly on 20.6.1881, at age 15 and 1 month, James was classified in VI class provisional student teacher. Then 3 years later on 20.6.1884 he was appointed Pupil Teacher from 28 April 1884. A few months later on 6.10.1884, the Inspector of Schools Mr Stewart wrote, "Should improve – rather slow". The use of the word "should" here is ambiguous. Was Mr Stewart issuing an imperative command that James must improve, or was he predicting that James had potential to improve? We suspect the latter.

Fourteen months later on 16.12.1884, James was judged as being competent to advance to the 3rd class level of teaching, pending assessment in Writing and the Art of Teaching. Apparently James applied himself, and on 5.6.1885, back dated to 1.4.1885, he was classified as a 3rd Class Teacher, although the critical Mr Stewart grudgingly comments "Shows improvement. Is improving".

James continued to progress as a teacher, being classified as 2nd Class as from 1.1.1886 (Mr Stewart at last recognising talent by recording "Works well"), and as 1st class effective 1.4.1887. On 31.3.1887 at age 21 and after 3 years teaching, James resigned.

A minor point of interest is that Thomas Blenkinsopp and Edward Edgar were also assessed as needing to improve in the Art of Teaching during their respective careers with the Victorian Education department. As Wal Wall remarks, "A systemic weakness evident in the Pescott family."

Archive records at the Victorian State Library have the following entries relating to James:

- 1893 Married Ettie Amelia Woodfull on 1 March 1893 at South Yarra
- 1899 Address shown in Census as 26 Gladstone Avenue, Malvern. Occupation Clerk
- 1902 Government Gazette, Department of Agriculture. Clerk Assists Accountant Class 4-1 on a salary of £200. Date commenced as a Civil Servant 28.4.1884 (this was the date he was appointed as an 18 year old Pupil Teacher at Chilwell School Geelong).
- 1903 Electoral Roll shows his address as 26 Gladstone Avenue Malvern. Occupation Civil Servant
- 1905 Government Gazette, Department of Agriculture. Clerk Assists Accountant Class 4-4 on a salary of £260.
- 1910 Government Gazette Department of Agriculture. Clerk Assists Accountant Class 3-2 on a salary of £335.
- 1917 Government Gazette Correspondence (Agriculture) Senior Clerk – Correspondence (appointed 1 January 1915). Has supervision of Branch, 32 years of service. Salary £456. Class 3-5.
- 1929 Government Gazette, Closer Settlement Department Secretary. Appointed 25 October
- 1929 Has supervision and management of branch. Salary £741. Class 1-4. 45 years of service

1931 Retired age 65. 47 years of service.

A few of the more memorable events in James' life are recorded as follows:

In 1898 James won a bible as 3rd prize in an examination set by the Women's Temperance Union. Exciting times!

By 1903 James and Ettie had 3 young children and were outgrowing the facilities of 26 Gladstone Street Malvern. James had a secure well paid job with bright prospects, and they decided to buy land and build a home in the then rural and distant from the city suburb of North Caulfield. Around 1904/1905 James' brother David supervised the construction of what was to 'become the family home at 88 Eskdale Road Caulfield. Here their 3 children, Dorothy, Keith and Cecily lived until they left home for marriage and commencement of their own families.

In the early 1930s when the Great Depression was biting hard, James and Ettie undertook a car trip which could be likened to a trip in year 2001 from Cape Town to Algiers and back. This was to drive their car from Melbourne along the mostly unsealed Hume and Pacific Highways to Brisbane (something like 1500 km each way) to visit their younger daughter Cecily and her husband Fred and their two small boys. James had purchased an American built Oakland 6. This vehicle was a state of the automobile art. It had a fabric roof, clip on mica side window covers, gorgeous smelling leather upholstery, big headlights and mysterious red tail lights. It also had running boards along each side, and family lore has it that on occasions swaggies, many of whom were on the roads in those days desperately looking for work, would run alongside the moving car attempting to jump on to the running board. There was no threat of violence, simply that they were looking for any sort of handout.

Only the very affluent people had cars, and of course very few homes had garages. So during their stay in Brisbane, the Oakland used to spend each night sharing a stable with the local bread carter's horse. Back home at 88 Eskdale Road there was a garage. It had an earth floor with a shallow trench dug in the centre between the wheel tracks. This trench allowed James access to the underside of the vehicle for inspection and maintenance. What his wife Ettie thought about washing dirt covered overalls is not known.

A characteristic stance of James was to sit in his chair, right arm lifted over his head, right hand holding a pencil, and with one finger of his right hand gently massaging his left temple. His left hand held a newspaper, folded such that the dominant feature was his favourite cryptic cross word puzzle, titled "Lady Bogey". The creator (or more realistically the sadistic perpetrator) of Lady Bogey would ascribe a target time for completion of each puzzle, typically 27 minutes or 33 minutes or other equally impossible duration. Consistent with his approach to life, James would faithfully time himself, and although he rarely met the target, he would never give up trying.

When talking with his grandchildren, James had a word which he used to describe almost everything. This word was "infundibulum". Here are some examples: "Grandpa, why do you sit like that?" "Well, it helps my infundibulum". "Grandpa, why do you put petrol and water in your car?" "Well it makes the infundibulum work properly." "Grandpa, why are horse jockeys little men?" "Well they have lots of infundibulum with their breakfast, and that stops them growing."

To keep his mind and body active in his later years, James took up lawn bowls, and became a member and regular player at the Caulfield Park Bowling Club which had been officially opened on 6 October 1923, 13 years after the concept had first been mooted. Unconfirmed it is thought that James joined this bowling club around 1931 upon his retirement from the Victorian Public Service. During the early 1940s James found that his lawful cerebral commands given to the moving parts of his body were being blatantly ignored, so he turned his interests to the card game of Solo, and spent many hours with his mates at the club following this pastime. So engrossed was James with his Solo that he had to be collected at the Club premises one morning at 11.00 am to attend the wedding of his eldest grand daughter Norma.

The family home, built by his brother David circa 1905, is at the corner of Eskdale and Wyuna Roads, North Caulfield. Because it was built in the then west corner of the wheat fields, the home became "Westfield". In the days of occupancy by James, Ettie and their three children, Dorothy, Keith and Cecily, the Eskdale Road boundary had a tall cypress pine hedge along the entire length, and the

Wyuna Road boundary had a tea tree hedge from the front gate to the back gate, then a tall paling fence to the rear boundary.. Privacy was assured. James' garden had the usual beds of iris at the front and carrots at the back, and he also favoured fruit growing. There were two lemon trees, an apricot tree, a prolific almond tree, a Damson plum, another plum and a trellis covered with a Waltham Cross grape vine. Except for the almonds, the birds had a lovely time in summer when the fruit ripened.

In those days, there were 3 horse stables in Eskdale Road, and every morning before daybreak the race horses would be heard clip clopping along Eskdale Road as they were taken to the nearby Caulfield Racecourse for morning gallops. Most of the residents of Eskdale Road had well fertilised gardens.

A favourite evening pastime of the family was to gather around the "Lincolnola" and sing along with the music and words on the pianola rolls. Both James and Ettie had good singing voices. This was also the scene after Saturday cricket when the "home" team and, as Norma Oakley puts it "the hangers on", gathered at Westfield to sing along. Another activity which amused James was to cut out of newspapers articles which took his fancy, and to paste these into a large blank page book. Political cartoons and "Believe It or Not" by Ripley were two of his favoured topics.

After some years of progressive degeneration of her mental faculties, Ettie died on 26 May 1944 at age 74. Her body was cremated at Springvale Crematorium. James died during 1957 at age 91.

Pescott Papers 12 – Edward Edgar Pescott (1)

This is the first of a couple of papers devoted to the youngest of Thomas Trewitt and Mary Ann Pescott's children, the tenth born, Edward Edgar Pescott. More than one paper will be written because of the amount of information about him that is on the public record. I will refer to him as 'Ted', since that is how everyone who has heard of him knows him.

Ted, if he were alive today, would be at the forefront of the gathering of information and the writing of the Pescott story. He wrote (among other things) two limited-edition biographies, *The Life Story of Joseph Furphy* (an in-law) and *James Bonwick*, and, of course, *The Centenary of Noble Street Methodist Church* in 1949. More of these in a later paper. He was aware of his heritage – he named his home in Camberwell 'Shalimar', and perhaps had started to put together a Pescott family history.

He dated a paper headed 'I have the following documents' 18/4/[19]32, and signed it 'Ted', suggesting that he had prepared the list of 17 documents for someone else's information, possibly a sibling. The original paper is in the possession of George Stevens, who received it from R.T.M. (Dick) Pescott. Following is a transcript of the 17 items listed by Ted, together with explanatory notes and comments.

Ted's 17 documents

1 Memo of marriage from Clergyman of James Dean and Eli. Clark. 9/5/1830

They were Mary Ann Dean's (Ted's mother) parents. They were married at Tyneside, Newcastle.

2 A letter from Joseph Graham to Dad, dated 19.3.1883 signed 'Your affectionate nephew'

I don't know who he can be – he certainly isn't a nephew in the first line.

One of Thomas's great grandmothers was Elizabeth Graham(e). She married Thomas Trewitt. Their daughter Elizabeth Trewitt (notice the change in spelling) married Joseph Pescod. Their son Joseph Pescod (= Pescott) married Elizabeth Manners, and they were Thomas's parents. Elizabeth Grahame had two brothers, George and William, so the affectionate 'nephew', Joseph Graham, could have been Thomas's 3rd cousin once removed. (See Descendants of Robert Grahame (also spelt 'Grame'), p. 6, but note that some of the information is unverified.)

The Pescods, Grahams and the Trewitts were county of Durham people. That Joseph Graham signed himself 'affectionate nephew' suggests that the different lines remained closely linked socially.

3 A memo of Dad's – stating the date of arrival of Shalimar – 14/11/1857 – voyage 86 days

4 Letter to Dad addressed, 'Dear Tom' – from T.W. Blenkinsop dated 13/10/1863, written after a visit to Australia

Mary Ann (Dean) Pescott had an older brother, James Richard Dean, who married Mary Ann Blenkinsop. Could it be that T.W. Blenkinsop and Mary Ann Blenkinsop are related, and that T.W. Blenkinsop visited Australia, in part, to visit the six-year-old who bore the Blenkinsop name, Thomas Blenkinsop Shalimar Pescott?

5–8 Four burial certificates of Mother's two little brothers & 2 sisters

They were: Thomas William Dean (1), born October 1835, died November 1835,

Thomas William Dean (2), born late 1836, died March 1837,

Elizabeth Anderson Dean (1), born April 1839, died May 1839,

Elizabeth Anderson Dean (2), born 1840, died 1841.

Mary Ann (Dean) Pescott's paternal grandmother was Jean Anderson.

9 Father's certificate of baptism – baptized 3/3/1828

Thomas was born 2.2.1828.

10 Memorial card of Mother's Father – 14/1/1867

The date is puzzling. James Dean (Mary Ann's father) was born 11.2.1806 and died 3.7.1852.

Incidentally, Mary Ann's mother died in 1845, aged 40, when Mary Ann was 12 years old; and her

father died aged 46, barely 3 months after Mary Ann and Thomas Pescott's marriage on 9.4.1852. There has to be a story there.

11 Marriage memo cert. of James Dean and Mrs Mary Ann Edgar 25/8/1852

There is a problem here. We have the date of the marriage of James to his sister-in-law Mary Ann (Clark) Edgar to be 20.7.1845, two months after James's wife's, Elizabeth Clark (= Mary Ann Clark's sister), death. Furthermore, James Dean died 3.7.1852, so it seems the 'marriage memo. cert.' is the date on which a memorandum of the marriage certificate was issued, not the date of the marriage.

12 Memorial card of Moses Pescott – killed 14/9/1835

This is Moses Manners Pescott, Thomas Trewitt Pescott's older brother. Moses was born in 1824, so he was 11 when he was 'killed'. There has to be a story there, too.

13 Birth cert. of Tom [written and crossed out is 'signed by doctor of ship'] signed by James Duncan, Geelong, 29/10/1857, date of certificate 10/12/1857

Tom is Thomas Blenkinsop Shalimar Pescott (Ted's oldest brother. Ted was only 6 when his brother Tom died). Thus, young Tom was a fortnight old when the Shalimar berthed at Point Henry, Geelong. The Pescotts had been in Chilwell, living at Clarendon Street (three streets to the south of Noble Street), for a month before Tom was registered by the Deputy Registrar at Geelong, whose name is more likely spelt 'Dunian', or even 'Quinan' (I have a photocopy of the original entry).

14 Baptismal cert. of James Dean, mother's father

James Dean was born on 11.2.1806 in Edinburgh. (Early Scottish records show birth dates, whereas early English records tend to show baptismal dates.)

15 Copy of the inscriptions of the tombstone of Mother's Father and Mother, & the four children and John David Edgar & Eliz Clarke – all evidently in the one grave

That is: James Dean, Elizabeth (Clarke) Dean, Thomas William Dean (1), Thomas William Dean (2), Elizabeth Anderson Dean (1), Elizabeth Anderson Dean (2), John David Edgar (= Mary Ann Clarke's 2nd husband) and surely Ted means Mary Ann Clark (= Elizabeth's sister) – not Eliz, Mary Ann's mother, who has already been mentioned. John David Edgar is the grandfather of Edward Pescott Edgar, who was Edward Edgar Pescott's 2nd cousin.

16 Newspaper notices of the death of Tom & Polly

That is: Ted's brother Thomas (d 1878) and his sister Mary Ann (d 1869).

17 Newspaper notice of the death of mother's mother

That is: Elizabeth (Clark) Dean who died 27.5.1845 in Newcastle, England.

Joe had Mother & Father's marriage cert., so I suppose it is lost by now.

Joe is Ted's brother Joseph Dene Pescott, who died in 1917, 15 years prior to the time Ted wrote this list, so the list was not prepared for him (or, probably, for one of Joe's sons either).

At the time when Ted wrote his list of family history documents (1932) he was 60 and was Government Pomologist and Seed Tester in the Victorian Department of Agriculture. He was also a part-time lecturer in botany at the Burnley School of Horticulture, of which he had been principal from 1909 to 1916.

Does anyone know the whereabouts of Ted's 17 documents?

Teacher

Edward Edgar Pescott was born on 11 December 1872. Our earliest record of his achievements (*News of the Week*, 18.11.1886) is of him being the highest marked boy in music examinations held amongst pupils of Geelong state schools, when he was just on 14. In the following year on 26.7.1887, at age 14 years 7 months, he followed his two brothers, Tom and Jim, by starting teaching at Chilwell State School, No. 2061, although his appointment to the position of pupil teacher on probation did not take effect until November 1888.

In December 1887, Ted was eligible by a mere couple of days to enter the under 15 boys Theory,

Sight and Song Singing Competition. He won first prize for his rendition of the song 'The Red, White and Blue'.

His singing ability should have given him an advantage in the classroom. His first inspection in 1888 resulted in the comment, 'Promises well'.

Ted, like his two brothers before him, did not fare well in examinations. He passed exams to progress through Third Class classification to First Class Pupil Teacher, but never at a single sitting, from 1889 to 1892. At various times he failed in dictation, reading, science, composition, drawing and art of teaching – not an impressive record.

A new inspector thought Ted had 'fair ability' in 1889. Later, Inspector Philp thought he was 'a fair teacher'. In the following year, 1893, Philp reported that Ted had a 'fair ability for teaching'.

Perhaps a contributing factor to Ted's seemingly poor exam performance was his music study, which was more successful, resulting in him being certified as 'Licensed to Teach Music' in 1893. In 1894 another inspector deemed him to be 'a very promising young man'. In 1895 he was judged to be 'reliable'.

Ted was also joint librarian at Noble Street Church at this stage, having taken over the job held earlier by his father.

Ted spent much of 1895 as relieving head teacher at three small Wimmera schools:

- Doctors Creek North, S.S. 2402, near Stawell, from May to July
- Cosgrove South, S.S. 3181, near Warracknabeal, from July to October
- Cannum West, S.S. 2968, between Stawell and Rapunyup, from October to December, returning to Chilwell at the end of the year, only to be sent back to Cannum West for the whole of 1896. While there he had two visits from Inspector Cavanaugh who thought Ted was 'a very fair teacher'. I get the impression that Ted and this inspector did not hit it off together. Cavanaugh said of Ted: 'Methods fair, control poor. Does not take interest enough in his work, does not endeavour sufficiently to rouse and brighten his pupils'.

Ted returned to Chilwell at the end of the year to sit for his Teaching Certificate – with the usual mixed success.

In 1897 Ted was sent back to Cannum West and lasted until September when he returned to Chilwell. Cavanaugh had given him a 'poor' report: '...secures hardly any progress, and teaching is wanting in impressiveness'.

Whether Ted deserved such a report, we have no way of knowing. Perhaps he did, and he decided to do something about it, for back at Chilwell an inspector said of him: 'He has thrown himself heartily into his work'. He was then given two months, October to December 1898, to prove himself in what must have been the most trying of all positions, the head teachership of two part-time schools, at Brit Brit and Tahara Bridge near Coleraine in Victoria's Western District. Ted would have taught for two and a half days at Brit Brit and then (in all likelihood) ridden a horse over to Tahara Bridge to teach the handful of pupils there the lessons he had taught at the other small school.

Back at Chilwell in 1899, at the age of 27, Ted finally was awarded his Teaching Certificate and was classified Class 7, sub-class 3, number 19. His first permanent appointment followed: to Jarrahmond, near Orbost, in East Gippsland. It was in this year that he passed an exam that was to change his life. He passed an Agricultural Science exam (examining body unknown). He was now getting 'good' reports: 'Displays activity and intelligence' and 'supervision is satisfactory and the instruction is imparted with care'.

Half way through the year 1900 Ted decided that he wasn't made for a career in teaching, and he saw a career in agriculture more attractive. His transfer from the Education Department to the Agriculture Department was put into effect on 11 September 1901, when he was appointed to the position of Inspector of Vegetables.

Collector

I am indebted to Rosalind (Johns) Hayles for much of the information included under this head. Rosalind has fond memories of her grandfather, Ted Pescott – ‘Grandpa with Pussy Cat’ – (her other grandfather had a dog) when he lived at 35 Seymour Grove, Camberwell.

It probably is a surprise to those who know of Ted’s fine reputation as a scientist to know that his first close-on thirty years were so ordinary, if not disappointing, in terms of his teaching career achievement. My interpretation of his struggle as a teacher is that he found the demands of the classroom and the system in which he worked too constraining, even, at times, petty. After all, he had two attributes that, in my experience, should have ensured a vibrant classroom: his musical ability and his love of nature. He dedicated his 1914 book, *The Native Flowers of Victoria*:

To the memory of

MY FATHER

who, through his innate love of the beautiful in Nature, first led me into Nature’s byepaths.

I feel that Ted found Nature’s by(e)paths so much more interesting and rewarding than the Education Department’s tram tracks.

One of Ted’s first recorded collections was that of grasses, for which he was awarded a gold medal by the Geelong Field Naturalists’ Club in the 1890s. There followed a silver medal for his work on ferns.

Ted spent, all up, two years at Cannum West. One bypath he explored while there followed his befriending some Aborigines. He accumulated a wonderful collection of Aboriginal artefacts that included an ‘incredibly smooth’ grinding stone and grinder, which later lined the driveway of Rosalind’s childhood home.

While at Jarrahmond, Ted explored the thick bush along the Snowy River, making a collection of native plants that is now held at the National Herbarium, Melbourne.

Perhaps the most impressive collection Ted made was of information on wattles (and I suppose of specimens). His *Census of the Genus Acacia in Australia* led to him being elected a fellow of the Linnean Society of London, one of the highest honours to be awarded to botanists worldwide.

Ted’s passion for collecting things that interested him was not confined to the plant world. He had a wonderful collection of shells housed in an equally wonderful cabinet. Of polished timber, it housed shallow, padded, smooth-running drawers. ‘Grandpa would take out one at a time and give it to us [Rosalind and Richard] to hold while he told us the story of where it came from and how the tiny creature inside lived and fed. Occasionally we were given one each to take home.’

Possibly Ted’s favourite collection was of bookplates. He had four large albums of them. In the language of hobbyists, he was an ‘ex libris collector’. ‘There was a complete story to go with each bookplate ... It was Grandpa’s bookplate collection which I used to get out for him when he was ill, and he enjoyed reminiscing again and telling me stories of the people connected with each one’, writes Rosalind.

Collecting bookmarks would have evolved from Ted’s love of collecting books. Quoting Ian McLaren (*Victorian Historical Magazine*, May 1965, pp. 85–6):

Edward Pescott was an avid collector of books relating to natural history and Australiana. His collection of natural history books covered the subject generally as well as the Australian field. The major part of his library was divided among his family, a few books were selected by the National Herbarium, and the balance offered for sale in 1956 by N.H. Seward, in their 24-page list entitled Books from the library of the Late E.E. Pescott.

He made one of the finest collections of the works of James Bonwick available, having most of the 108 works by this author ...

Mr Pescott also had fine collections of first editions of Rolf Boldrewood, Marcus Clark, Joseph Furphy and other authors; his other fields of collecting included Daniel Bunce [member of Leichhardt expedition], anthropology, shipwrecks, local history ... and books printed in and about Geelong, the illustrated books of S.T. Gill ...

Ted kept letters – of course. Rosalind remembers her grandfather’s correspondence with Mrs Aeneas Gunn (*The Little Black Princess*), Tullie Wollaston (*The Spirit of the Child*) and Baron Ferdinand von

Mueller. Ted's collection of cuttings and photographs pertaining to von Mueller, *Relique Muelleriana*, is kept at the National Herbarium.

Philately was another of Ted's interests. He specialised in misprints. One such had the emu on the coat of arms (on the King George V definitive series, 1914–1936) appearing as if it were laying an egg – to the amusement of his grandchildren.



Pescott Papers 13 – Edward Edgar Pescott (2) February 2002

Tangents to the Ted Pescott story

The Edgar family

Ian McLaren (author of Edward Edgar Pescott, 1872–1954, *Victorian Historical Magazine*, May 1965) wrote: '[In migrating to Australia, the Pescott family] travelled with the Edgar family, whose name was to be included in those given to the subject of this paper'. Reference to this statement has already been made in Pescott Paper 3 and of how the Pescott and Edgar families were both related and close friends. David James Edgar was Mary Ann Dean's first cousin – their mothers were sisters, Elizabeth and Mary Ann Clarke.

There are problems still unsolved about the David James Edgar family. The main problem is that no member of the Edgar family sailed on the *Shalimar*, the ship on which the Pescott family migrated to Australia. Some of their children were born in the USA (when and why did David James Edgar go to America?), and some were born in Geelong. We don't know where Ted's almost namesake, Edward Pescott Edgar, was born, but it was most likely in America about 4 years before Ted was born, indicating how strong the affection between the two families was. The Edgar son closest in age to Ted was John David Edgar (same name as his grandfather), who shared the position of Noble Street Sunday school librarian with Ted.

When David James Edgar died in 1919 Ted's brother David was a pall bearer at the funeral service. David was also a coffin bearer when another 2nd cousin, Thomas Clarke Edgar, was buried. George Pescott was a pall bearer on that occasion. I mention these facts to further illustrate the closeness of the two families, yet in my family no oral story of the Edgars has passed on to me.

David James Edgar's sister, Elizabeth Janet (Edgar) Collins, also lived and died in Geelong. See the list of John David Edgar's descendants for more details.

One other coincidence – or product of design – linking the Pescotts and Edgars is the naming of Mary Ann Edgar. Mary Ann Pescott died aged 14 in 1869. She was known as 'Polly'. Mary Ann Edgar was born in 1871. She, also, was known as 'Polly' (in newspaper death notice of her father 17.7.1919).

Does anyone have any Edgar stories to relate?

Ted's literary subjects

Rolf Boldrewood

'Rolf Boldrewood' was the pen-name of Thomas Alexander Browne. Of Ted's father's generation, Browne wrote the classic Australian pioneer story, *Robbery under Arms*, writing 20 novels in all. Browne was, at different times, farmer, police magistrate and goldfields commissioner.

James Bonwick (1855 – 1906)

Bonwick was, like Ted himself, a man of wide interests and high intellect. At different times he was teacher, inspector of denominational schools in Victoria and South Australia, geographer, anthropologist, lecturer, journalist, writer, historian and archivist.

Daniel Bunce (1813 – 1872)

Bunce died in Geelong the year Ted was born. He was Curator of Geelong Botanical Gardens at the time, and had been so since 1858. Before that he had been a nurseryman, the naturalist on Ludwig Leichhardt's second trans-Australia expedition, a mine manager at Bendigo and a writer on botany, gardening, travel and Aboriginal language.

Marcus Clark

Writer of the classic Australian novel *For the Term of His Natural Life* set in a Tasmanian penal colony.

Joseph Furphy (1843 – 1912)

Writer of another Australian classic *Such Is Life* using the pen-name Tom Collins. Joseph Furphy was Ted's wife's uncle.

S.T. Gill (1818 – 1880)

Samuel Thomas Gill, a water colourist, was known as the 'painter of the goldfields'.

Jeannie (Mrs Aeneas) Gunn (1870 – 1961)

Jeannie Gunn was a novelist and portrayer of outback life.

Ferdinand von Mueller (1825 – 1896)

Mueller was the director of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens when the Pescott family arrived in Geelong in 1857. He held the position until 1873, during which time he instituted the National Herbarium.

Tullie Wollaston

Wollaston was an opal buyer and miner.

Horticulturalist

In PP 12, I said that Ted's life changed when he passed an agricultural science exam, but just as important was his association with Charles French, the Government Entomologist at that time. Ted owed much to French's encouragement, who would have alerted Ted to the newly established Orchard Branch of the Agricultural Department.

Ted's first permanent appointment in the Department of Agriculture was to Shepparton where he met Samuel Furphy, a man with interests similar to his own. Furphy was a naturalist and an authority on Aborigines. Samuel's son John had established a foundry at Shepparton and was to become famous for his mobile water tanks used by the army in World War I in the desert campaign. (The gathering of troops around the tanks to collect water and the latest news led to the word 'furphy' entering the language meaning 'rumour'.)

Another of Samuel's son, Joseph, a self-taught workingman, has already been referred to, being the novelist who wrote *Such Is Life*. Ted cemented his relationship with the Furphy family when he married John's daughter, Violet Jane Furphy, at Shepparton on May 24, 1906. Ted's time at Shepparton was, in McLaren's words, 'a stimulating and exciting period for young Pescott'.

Ted was transferred to Ivanhoe in the following year, and would have become aware of the problems the principal of Burnley Horticultural College (set up in the time when Alfred Deakin, later Australian Prime Minister, was Minister for Agriculture in the Victorian Government) was having with the Board of Advice and the Minister for Agriculture at that time. His teaching certificate turned out to be of benefit, because Ted was appointed Principal of Burnley in 1909.

McLaren said that Ted 'commenced gardening courses for women', but these had been started by a previous principal, Luffman, and were the cause of the friction between Luffman and the authorities. This was an era when most of higher education opportunities were denied to women, so that when Burnley opened its doors to female students, there was a flood of applicants. The Melbourne *Argus* dealt with the issue in full and even printed a 67-line ironical poem, a few lines of which capture its flavour:

An Eden this

Surpassing Father Adam's, for he had

Only one Eve, while Luffman has five score;

A paradise wherein they without reproof

Eat of the tree of knowledge, and alas,

A paradise wherein the serpent lurks,

The Serpent Board.

But Ted did introduce innovations, including free demonstrations of pruning and the introduction of a generous agriculture component to the course. He illustrated his botany lectures with his own slides. One of Australia's most renowned landscape gardeners, Edna Walling, would have attended Ted's botany lectures.

The *Who's Who in Australia* (1927–28) entry on Ted states: 'Pescott was a tall, energetic man, with a

friendly yet direct manner'. In the *History of Burnley*, the author is more forthright:

For all the innovation and improvement he carried out, Pescott was a controversial figure with his superiors. Often, it seems, he chose to ignore official direction, going his own way and making his own decisions. This led in 1916 to some unpleasantness that resulted [in his resuming] his work within the Department of Agriculture.

I have often pondered these lines – do they capture a distinctive Pescott trait?

Ted's 'unpleasant' experience didn't extend to his relationship with the college, for he continued as a part-time lecturer in botany until 1939. And the Department knew his worth, appointing him Government Pomologist and Seed Tester in 1917, a post he held, with one interlude, until he retired in 1937.

The interlude was when Ted was appointed Acting Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, from 1922 to 1923. (The gardens weren't the 'Royal' gardens until his nephew Dick Pescott's time.). This occurred when the director was on sick leave. Dick Pescott refers to his uncle's short tenure in his book *The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne*:

During one of Cronin's prolonged absences, between November 1921 and September 1922, E.E. Pescott had taken over as relieving director. He had been principal of the Burnley School of Horticulture from 1909 to 1916, and later government pomologist and seed tester in the Victorian Department of Agriculture. His knowledge of and experience with native flora was valuable during this interim period.

Wattle Day

Soon after Federation there was a move to have the wattle declared the national flower of Australia (actually, this was a revival of a pre-federation movement). After a slow beginning, leagues started to be formed that pushed for such a move. The first Victorian Wattle League was formed on 1 September, 'Wattle Day', 1911. The *Melbourne Age* recorded on the 6th of September that E.E. Pescott was a member of the executive committee of the new organisation.

Ted became secretary of the league in 1912. He organised an excursion to Hurst's Bridge (later, 'Hurstbridge'), over 1000 people visiting 'wattle land'. In that year the *Argus* reported that 3000 people made what was then an annual pilgrimage to the grave of Adam Lindsay Gordon, each one wearing a sprig of wattle. Ted continued to organise such excursions for a number of years.

The first Federal Wattle League meeting was held in Melbourne in January 1913, with Ted as its first secretary. Later in the year one-penny and two-penny stamps featuring wattle sprays were issued. At the first Anzac Day ceremony (25 April 1916) a planting of wattle trees took place in the Botanic Gardens, Domain, Melbourne under the auspices of the Victorian Wattle League.

In 1914 Ted produced and issued privately 200 copies of *A Census of the Genus Acacia in Australia*. This was the work that gained him his fellowship of the Linnean Society, London.

Ted acted as secretary of the Victorian league until 1920, and was treasurer of the federal league from 1912 to 1922. He did not live to see the wattle officially declared our national flower, it being only recently, in 1988, that the golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) gained parliamentary approval. Nevertheless, every time we become aware of Australia's national flower there is the opportunity for us to remember Ted's singular contribution to our national identity. (Think wattle – think Ted Pescott.)

Societies and clubs

Ted was a member and office bearer of a number of organisations that were associated with his work and interests.

- He was a member, and president from 1912 to 1917, of the Victorian Horticultural Society.
- He was a Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society.
- Ted belonged to the Cactus and Succulent Society and the Victorian Orchid Club, indicating that he loved exotic plants as well as natives. The orchid named after him, *Chiloglottis pescottiana*, is now

thought to be a naturally occurring hybrid, and is now labelled *Chiloglottis x pescottiana*.

- Although he had been awarded medals for collections of plants by the Geelong Field Naturalist Club in his Geelong years, Ted didn't join the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria until 1913, becoming an honorary life member in 1947. He was the club's secretary in 1920 and its president from 1926 to 1928, during which time the Club's representation to government led to the Wildflower and Native Plant Protection Act being enacted. His interests in the club included birds as well as plants.
- Ted joined the Royal Historical Society of Victoria in 1929, retaining membership throughout his life. For Ted, it was a natural step to take from natural history to Australian history.
- He directed and organised wildflower and nature shows at the Melbourne and St Kilda halls.
- In the early 1920s Ted presented over 100 weekly broadcasts on native flora.

Writer

Many of Ted's articles associated with his work with the Department of Agriculture appeared in the *Journal of the Department of Agriculture*. From 1915 to 1946 he made 32 contributions to the *Victorian Naturalist*. He also had two major papers published in the *Victorian Historical Magazine*: The Pioneers of Horticulture in Victoria and The Writings of Daniel Bunce. he contributed regularly to *Stock and Land*.

In 1938 Ted published *The Life Story of Joseph Furphy*, a much sort after book, since the edition of 75 copies was hand set and hand printed, Ted signing each copy. Ted was the secretary of a committee that published a Joseph Furphy memorial volume.

Books that Ted wrote were (some have already been mentioned):

- *A Census of the Genus Acacia in Australia*, 1914
- *The Native Flowers of Victoria*, 1914
- *The Dahlia in Australia*, 1920
- *Bulb Growing in Australia*, 1926
- *Gardening in Australia, a Practical Guide*, 1926
- *Rose Growing in Australia* (no date)
- *The Orchids of Victoria*, 1928
- *Wild Flowers of Australia*, 1929
- *The Life Story of Joseph Furphy*, 1938
- *James Bonwick: a writer of school books and histories*, 1939
- *New Way Gardening – A Home Beautiful Handbook for Amateurs* (no date)
- *Noble Street Methodist Church, Chilwell, Geelong. The Centenary Story 1849–1949*, 1949

The preceding list is taken from the article that I have referred to on a number of occasions: Edward Edgar Pescott, 1872–1954 by Ian F. McLaren, *Victorian Historical Magazine*, Vol. 36, No. 2, May 1965. McLaren also lists the publications for which Ted contributed introductions, forewords and chapters. A significant chapter he wrote for a book on wattles was *Australia's Queen of Blossoms: The Golden Wattle*.

McLaren gave the following additional references:

- *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 7, 1958
- *Who's Who in Australia*, 1950
- *Australian Literature*, E.M. Miller & F.T. Macartney, 1956.

The reference to Ted in the history of Burnley Horticultural College is found on the internet, as is a short biography in the



The bookplate above is from the Melbourne-based Bread and Cheese Club which enjoyed its heyday in the 1930s and 40s. The name 'Bread and Cheese Club' was chosen to reflect the bohemian nature of the group and its slogan of 'Mateship, Art, Letters' emphasised basic comforts, as the clubrooms were situated in a dark alley off Post Office Place 'above the waitresses' dressing rooms of a low-class restaurant'. The club made a virtue of 'refusing every overture to include women'. This group only admitted published writers, artists and musicians who had contributed to the Australian cultural scene. They produced bookmarks with the emblem of the Bread and Cheese Club and the slogan 'Combine Pleasure and Patriotism READ Australian Books'.

Ted was a member of the Melbourne Bread and Cheese Club, and the club's interest in bookplates helps to explain why Ted made a collection of them.

The original Bread and Cheese club was initiated by J. Fenimore Cooper (author of *The Last of the Mohicans*) in New York in 1824. It was a literary society described as an 'august body of scholarly enquiry'.

The name of the club derived from the method of balloting for membership: 'bread' was an affirmative vote, and 'cheese' was a negative vote.

Ted, like his father and his brothers David, George and Joseph, was a trustee of a Methodist church – in his case, the Camberwell Methodist Church.

Ted made a contribution to society (outside of his work, private life and interests) by taking on responsibilities with the Victorian State Relief Committee, set up in the depression years to assist the needy in the 1930s. He was its deputy chairman from 1934 to 1945 and chairman from 1945 to 1954.

We don't have any information about whether Ted made use of his License to Teach Music.

A personal memory of Uncle Ted written in the form of a reverie

The Last Leaf on the Tree

Mum was taking Dad's cricket cap and jacket off the hatstand in the front hall.

'Can I go down to the river this an/o, with the other kids?'

'No. I want you to tidy up and put your good shoes on.'

'Why?',' and in the same breath, 'Where's Dad? Has he gone to cricket?' A silly question – his cap and jacket were still here.

'No. He's gone out for the afternoon.' This was said in that tone of voice that told you that you would get no further information, no matter how many questions you asked. But having to 'tidy up' deserved an explanation.

'Why can't I go out?'

'Because Uncle Ted's coming to visit Grandma.'

That answered the unanswered questions and a few other unasked ones. Why I couldn't go _out. Why I had to put my good shoes on. Why the hat stand was being emptied. Why Dad had gone out for the afternoon. Why Mum had been up late last night cooking. Why she had spent all morning cleaning, sweeping, dusting and putting clean linen on the dining room table. Why I had to get chips A in for the bath heater for Gran to have a bath. And why, especially, brother Arthur was in the T bedroom sulking, because he, too, had to stay home.

Recently, a small assemblage of some of Uncle Ted's great nieces and nephews had a laugh at his expense. We had all experienced the occasion of a visit from Uncle Ted. One of his sisters or brothers – my Gran was his 4-years older sister Lily – would be dressed in their best, waiting with pride for Ted to arrive. A niece would have been busy for two days, as Mum had been, getting the house in order. They would have felt a little proud about the visit, but that pride was over-ridden by anxiety. For the next generation, there was some anxiety, and resentment replaced pride.

Mum went to the front door in answer to the knock delivered not by knuckles but by the silver knob of a cane. She welcomed a tall, smiling, top-hatted gentleman decked out in an immaculate three-piece suit complete with watch chain attached to the vest. The corner of a white handkerchief adorned the top pocket of his coat. The studded cuffs of his shirt showed fashionably, and his starched collar held a perfectly knotted tie. He handed his cane, hat, gloves and shoulder cape to his niece who carefully placed them on the hat stand. After greeting the adults, Uncle Ted turned to his great-nephews, 'My word, you are growing into tall young fellows'. Arthur and my eyes met momentarily and both looked to the ceiling, but turned to the giver of the would-be compliment and smiled mutely. There were no words that would satisfy the adults, yet allow us to maintain our boyhood dignity.

Arthur and I, on our best behaviour, were allowed one piece of cake while we studiously A" ignored the adults' conversation and one piece as we were granted permission to leave the table. Outside, dressed in our Saturday clothes we agreed, 'He's got tickets on himself'.

How many years was it before I regretted not having taken the opportunity of befriending Uncle Ted and learning something of why his parents, brothers and sisters were so proud of Edward Edgar Pescott? Was the toff I met the same man who scoured the thick Snowy River bushland collecting flora specimens now deposited in the National Herbarium; who became head of Burnley School of Horticulture, examiner in Botany, authority on native orchids and wild flowers, radio broadcaster, Government Pomologist, author of books on horticulture, horticultural history and wild life, mover for the wattle blossom to become the national floral emblem, president of Royal Horticultural Society and of Field Naturalists Club of Victoria and fellow of the Linnean Society of London?

He was, and he had knowledge and expertise in areas that I don't have but now value. Annually, I have the odd imagined meeting with Uncle Ted, the fruit tree expert, dressed in top hat and wielding his cane, giving me guidance in my amateurish pruning efforts in the orchard. Last night he said to me, 'Wallace it's time to prune the apple trees. Haven't you noticed it?'

'Yes, Uncle Ted, I have. It's on the Granny Smith—the last leaf on the tree.'

Soldier settlement

As far as anniversaries of settlements go, 50 years is not a long time.

For the organisers of this weekend's 50th anniversary celebrations of the Heytesbury settlement around Simpson, that's a good thing.

Although many of the original settlers have passed on, it means there are still enough around who can remember the transformation of what was once a big tract of native forest.

Ken Unwin, one of the last to get a land allocation under the settlement scheme in 1976, said the Heytesbury was one of Victoria's last big land settlement schemes.

Restrictions on the clearance of native vegetation meant schemes such as the Heytesbury would not be possible in today's times, he said.

Mr Unwin, of Simpson, said many of Simpson's population of 190 were people who had come off farms that were developed under the Heytesbury scheme.

The scheme developed a strong community spirit among settlers that was still part of the character of the 800–1000 people who live in the Heytesbury area today.

"Everyone came in on the same footing and they all progressed together," Mr Unwin said. "The strong bond is still there."

Mr Unwin has written a book, *The Heytesbury Settlement 50 Years On: Memories, Madness and Miracles*, that will be launched at the settlement's anniversary celebrations on March 6–7.

The book contains the memories of a number of settlers as well as updating the history of the settlement.

Mr Unwin said the scheme was not a soldier settlement program but involved people from a wide range of nationalities, many of them Dutch.

While ex-servicemen got preference in getting a land allocation, those who received them ranged from a former German serviceman to a Dutchman who served in the resistance against the Germans.

"This type of scheme united all peoples," Mr Unwin said.

He said many Dutch immigrants were attracted to the scheme because they had a background in dairying and saw the prospect of getting their own farm.

Most settlers got a block of between 73 ha (180 acres) to 81 ha (200 acres), a three-bedroom weatherboard home, dairy and a machinery shed.

The settlers leased their property for the first three years after which they had the opportunity buy it at low interest rates.

It was a barren outlook for those first settlers, with wide-scale clearance by heavy machinery leaving a treeless landscape that earned the area the moniker of the "Simpson Desert".

Left without windbreaks, strong winds swept endlessly over the barren hills.

When trace element deficiencies in the soil and attacks by grubs on new pastures prompted about half of the first 13 settlers to walk off their properties, the settlement became known as "Bolte's Blunder," — a barb aimed at the settlement's principal advocate Victorian Premier Henry Bolte.

The walk-offs prompted the Settlement Commission to provide further assistance, clearing up windrows of felled timber left on properties and resowing failed pastures.

After farmers implemented new pasture establishment practices, the area took off to become a successful dairying area.

Sir Henry was delighted to declare it "Bolte's Bonanza" when opening the Simpson Kraft factory in 1966.

One of the original settlers was Bridget “Bridgie” Allen, who came to the Heytesbury in 1960 as one of the first 23 families in the area.

Mrs Allen, who still lives in Simpson, said times were tough, particularly after her husband Bill died four years after they arrived.

The family, which had eight children, started off with 29 cows and eventually expanded the herd to 80 after establishing pastures.

She and one of her teenage sons worked the farm until 1975 when milk prices dropped dramatically and her son embarked upon a career in teaching.

Mrs Allen returned to nursing and eventually became the nursing matron at Timboon hospital.

She said the bond between the first 23 families was “marvellous.”

“The first 23 were mates,” she said.

After her husband died, she received great assistance from other families and the Settlement Commission, which helped her remain on the farm.

Mr Unwin said many of the original 376 farms in the settlement had since been absorbed into larger properties. He said the area’s reliable rainfall had seen it develop into one of Australia’s best dairying producers.

Blue gum plantations made inroads into the dairying land in the past few decades but that move stalled some years ago, he said, further hit by the collapse of two of the biggest plantation owners around Heytesbury – Timbercorp and Great Southern – during last year’s global financial crisis.

The Heytesbury Land Settlement Project

Prior to the formation of the Soldier Settlement Commission in 1946 the large bushland tract known as the Heytesbury Forest was already under consideration as a possible settlement area. The Heytesbury Shire established a committee with Councillor R. E. Harris as Chairman and F. M. George Esq as Secretary, to help promote the scheme in collaboration with the Otway and Colac Shire Councils and local organisations.

In 1946 an advisory committee headed by J. F. Cockayne and D.D. McKenzie, was appointed by the Soldier Settlement Commission. This Committee actively associated itself with the Commission, the Department of Agriculture and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in the establishment and operation of an experimental area started in 1947. The potential of the country for pastures was clearly demonstrated and in 1956 the Premier, the Honourable Sir Henry Bolte, G.C.M.G. authorised the commencement of the project.

In the same year, under the Officer-in-Charge, W.N. Melrose Esq. B.E.M., the Soldier Settlement Commission (later to become the Rural Finance Commission) commenced full scale development.

Modern land clearing equipment went immediately into operation and with pastures progressively becoming established the project was to prove one of the most successful land settlement schemes.

The area developed to pasture was 43 000 hectares. In 1960 the first settlers took up their farms and by 1976 there were 378 families in occupation with further families to follow as additional land was released.

By becoming one of the top dairy production areas in Australia the scheme justified the confidence of those who first advocated its establishment and those who accepted the challenge to bring the country into production from its virgin state.

Credit also goes to the young families who successfully set about consolidating themselves on their own farms.

The township of Simpson is located on the spot where development commenced and is named after the first chairman of the Commission, H. L. Simpson Esq., C.B.E., who with vigour and inspired administration contributed so much to the successful foundation of the scheme.

Agriculture – how government kick-started land settlement
by Charles Bignold
News Weekly, 25 March 2000

It is now 40 years since the first 24 settlers moved into the desolate landscape of the Heytesbury Settlement – one of the most successful land settlement schemes in the world.

The area of land south of Cobden, to the sea and the foothills of the Otway Ranges was unproductive to the earlier generation of farmers seeking land, in spite of a reliable rainfall of 36 inches.

As early as 1932 experiments began, and found that the soil was lacking some trace elements, mostly molybdenum. With the correct mix of fertiliser, two experimental farms were set up and proved successful.

In 1956, the Rural Finance & Settlement Commission began the mammoth task of preparing 100 000 acres of bush for the purpose of eventually settling about 450 farmers.

The land was cleared, ploughed, fertilised and sown down to permanent pasture. After a period of time, the pasture was grazed by a herd of Hereford cattle run by the Commission – and a Pioneer township was set up as the headquarters, and accommodation for the working crew.

Roads were put through where previously there were none, farms were surveyed, averaging about 180 acres. Dams were built for water storage and the farm buildings were erected.

What made the scheme unique was that the farms were complete with 3 bedroom weatherboard house, garage, utility shed, concrete dairy, dams and windmills – in other words ready to go.

1960 saw the first batch of farms advertised for prospective young farmers – applicants went through a selection panel of Commission personnel who took into account the candidate's experience, marital status, number of children, assets, and general capacity to move into a new area and make a success of the venture. The applicants far outnumbered the farms ready for settlement.

There were critics of the whole scheme. Professor Samuel Wadham had doubts – as did some of the neighbouring farmers – and the first batch met with difficulties of various kinds. Underground caterpillars cleaned out the pastures, and the chemicals used to control the grubs contaminated the milk and it was condemned for human consumption for a long time. Some farms had to wait six months to be connected to electric power. Some of the farms had some areas uncleared and all farms had huge heaps of unburnt timber.

Trail blazers

The first 24 were the trail blazers and, after a few years of hardship, most made progress, which gave heart to the families that followed.

Farms were allocated at the rate of 50 or so a year, and as the numbers grew so did the township, which was officially given the name "Simpson" after the Chairman of the Commission. Churches were built, a hotel, primary school on a generous acreage, public hall and recreation reserve, Guide and Scout hall and so on.

The terms for the settlers were set up by an Act of Parliament and consisted of initial three year temporary lease during which the stocking rate was limited and the farmer had to carry out certain improvements, such as fencing and laying on of water to the paddocks.

Finance was available for necessary equipment, and that was repaid by a deduction of 25% of the milk cheque. This covered the rent first, and any amount left came off the loan. If there was no milk cheque, no money came out. It was a very humane arrangement. At the end of the temporary lease, the land was valued and a Purchase Lease was entered into. Terms were over a period of 40 years at 4% interest. The generous terms enabled the family to gain a foothold in its new enterprise and also help build up a thriving community.

New groups welcomed

To be allocated a block, one had to be an Australian citizen, but settlers came from many countries. Quite a number came from Holland, and also from Germany, Poland and the UK. Each incoming group was welcomed by the previous settlers in a function at the Cobden Civic Hall. There were many working bees to get things going in the district, sporting clubs, Scouts and Guides.

When the primary school eventually opened it began with 340 children, as the average number of children per family was five. North of the Princes Highway the average number was 2.5. There was a great community spirit.

Compared to earlier generations, the Heytesbury settlers had it easy and were nicknamed "Cream Puff" pioneers by some of the locals – but life had its moments and wasn't all beer and skittles.

As the years went by and the township of Simpson grew, so the whole surrounding area prospered, with machinery firms, stock agents, service industries, dairy factories, grain merchants, cartage contractors, veterinary surgeons, school teachers, engineering firms. Bonlac has a huge dairy plant in Cobden employing 300, and three or four other dairy companies operated in the area.

The whole scheme was paid for by the herd of Herefords which the Commission ran and of course is now dispersed, so there was no cost to the taxpayer.

Apart from the great opportunity offered to the 400 or so farming families, the value to the surrounding district is incalculable

Camperdown Chronicle (Vic. 1877–1954), Saturday 14 March 1931 Closer Settlement Board

Heytesbury Estate. Farm Allotments. Applications, accompanied by the necessary deposits are invited by the Closer Settlement Board from the general public to take up the , farm allotments as specified hereunder:—Full particulars may be obtained from the Enquiry Branch, Lands Department. Melbourne C.2, and Mr Robilliard, Closer Settlement Board Inspector, Timboon. Allotments Referred to: Allotment S3. Parish of Nullawarre, 3–15 acres, capital value £245; deposit and fees. £1.5/-. Capital value includes improvements—clearing £72 10/. Allotment SO, Parish of Nullawarre, 283 acres, capital value £141 10/-; deposit and fees, £1 5/-. Allotments available under "Mountainous Area" conditions. J. R. PESCOTT. Secretary. Closer Settlement Board, Melbourne, 9/3/31.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT BOARD. Parish of Geelengla. Tenders, addressed to the Secretary, Closer Settlement Board, Public Offices, Melbourne, C. 2, and endorsed, "Tuudei'a for Leasing Allotment 30, Section A, Parish of Geeiengla," will be received until 12 o'clock (noon) on Friday, 27th March 1931, for the right to lease 128 acres 1 rood 28 perches, being Allotment 30, Section A, Parish of Geelengla, formerly held by M. McLeod. The leave will be for a period of 12 months from V-I/31. Rent" is payable quarterly in advance and the first quarter's is to be lodged with tender. The successful tenderer must keep all fencing and other improvements in efficient repair and will be liable for Shire Rates and other charges for the period of his occupation. The highest, or any tender not necessarily accepted. .1. R. PESCOTT, Secretary Closer Settlement Board, Melbourne. 0/3/31,

Camperdown Chronicle (Vic. : 1877–1954), Thursday 18 August 1938 Damage by take-all grub

Infected Areas in Lower Heytesbury. Seed for Re-sowing Pastures.

When a deputation of Lower Heytesbury settlers waited on the Closer Settlement Commission regarding the damage caused by the take-all grub the commission promised to send afield officer to make a thorough inspection of the infected areas, and to assist in every way. Mr Chapman, a field officer, accompanied by Mr Pescott, the Department of Agriculture, visited the settlement and made a preliminary inspection. A meeting of settlers in the Lower Heytesbury school crowded the building to its limit, between 50 and 90 being present. Mr Pescott gave an address on the life history of various pests. Pests had been controlled in small areas, he said, but he knew of no method of controlling them in broad acres. He was of the opinion that the invasion of the take-all grub would die out after about three years, being worst in the third year. The two dry autumns and mild winters, he thought, had been responsible for the present outbreak. The pest in Heytesbury was now in its third year. Mr Chapman outlined the position as far as the commission was concerned, and said he would inspect every infected holding. He would recommend that seed and manure be supplied for re-sowing damaged pastures in the autumn, and for the present needs, that seed for summer fodder crops, up to 40 acres, be supplied at once. ,Where the settlers had lost cattle and needed relief immediately, he would recommend that a two months' supply of fodder he supplied.

Soldier settlement

This text should be read in conjunction with the Pescott Paper of James Richard. It is by no means an academic treatment of the topic, merely some observations based upon research into the various circumstances which would have influenced James in his capacity as Secretary to the Victorian Government Closer Settlement Board between 1929 and 1931. In essence, James had an impossible job to do as will be understood in the following.

The Closer Settlement Scheme had its origins in the Land Settlement process which came into being during the 1860s. At that period, a growing majority Australians felt and expressed resentment against the minority wealthy “squattocracy” which dominated Australian agriculture. It was proposed that the introduction of the English system of yeomanry was necessary to spread the wealth. Accordingly under the banner of the Closer Settlement Board, selected applicants were allocated crown land for lease and given financial assistance to establish small agricultural enterprises.

By the early 1900s, it was clear that the concept was not working, and a Royal Commission was convened. In 1915 this Royal Commission concluded that “closer settlement has proved a failure”. The main reasons given were that the land holdings were too small, that the lower limit of capital required by applicants was too low, that the extent of financial assistance was too low, and that in some cases the land was unsuitable for the enterprise activity.

By 1916 when the Anzacs were starting to return home from WW1, a politically motivated scheme was introduced to assist returned soldiers to become self sufficient income earners, and to contribute to the nation’s wealth, by extending the provisions of the Closer Settlement Scheme to selected applicants for Soldier Settlement assistance.

However, despite the findings of the Royal Commission, the offers of soldier settlement were completely inappropriate. The tracts of land were too small, the capital required was even less than that under the previous scheme, and in many cases the land was totally unsuitable. Areas of the Gippsland and Mallee scrubs are examples.

In 1925, reports show that in Victoria, 10 565 soldiers had been granted leases, but of these 1111 had quit – surrendered their lease or simply walked off in desperation. By 1927 the number of leases granted in total had risen to 11 152, but 1903 had quit. By 1929, Victoria’s debt had grown to significant levels, and the biggest single contributor was Closer Settlement at A approximately 10 million pounds. By 1938, more than 50% of soldiers settled had quit, many i absolutely penniless, all totally disillusioned. (Note 1).

Again, the main causes were land unsuitable for agriculture, lack of capital, and in the light of present day knowledge, a lack of scientific advice and support. Another factor was probably the political scene. In the period 1917 through 1929, Victoria had 6 governments, and during this period the portfolio of Lands (the Department of Lands administered the Closer Settlement Scheme and its extension to the Soldier Settlement Scheme) changed ministerial hands 10 times.

So, this was the environment in which James Pescott worked, and because of the circumstances probably received not one word of thanks for persevering with an ill conceived and impossible task, predicted by quite a few politicians at the onset as likely being an almost total failure, which ultimately turned out to be so.

Notes

1. Different reports at different dates show slightly different figures. Those quoted here are representative.

The information in this summary has been extracted from the following publications:

1. “The Limits of Hope”, ISBN 0 19 554666 0, an historical record 1915–1938 of Victorian Soldier Settlement compiled by Marilyn Lake from her Ph.D. research
2. Report to the Victorian Government Legislative Assembly by the Committee of Public Accounts, Victoria (Closer Settlement and Discharged Soldiers Settlement Funds), 1st August 1922.
3. Report of the Proceedings and Debates of the Conference of Representatives of the

Commonwealth and State Governments and of the Federal Parliamentary War Committee in respect of the Settlement of Returned Soldiers on the Land, Held at Melbourne 17th–19th February 1916’.

4. “Land of Hope”: Soldier Settlement in Western District of Victoria 1918–1930, (Working Paper Series No 9911, June 1999) by Dr Monica Keneley, Deakin University, Faculty of Business and Law.

Compiled by G Stevens, Vincentia NSW September 2001.